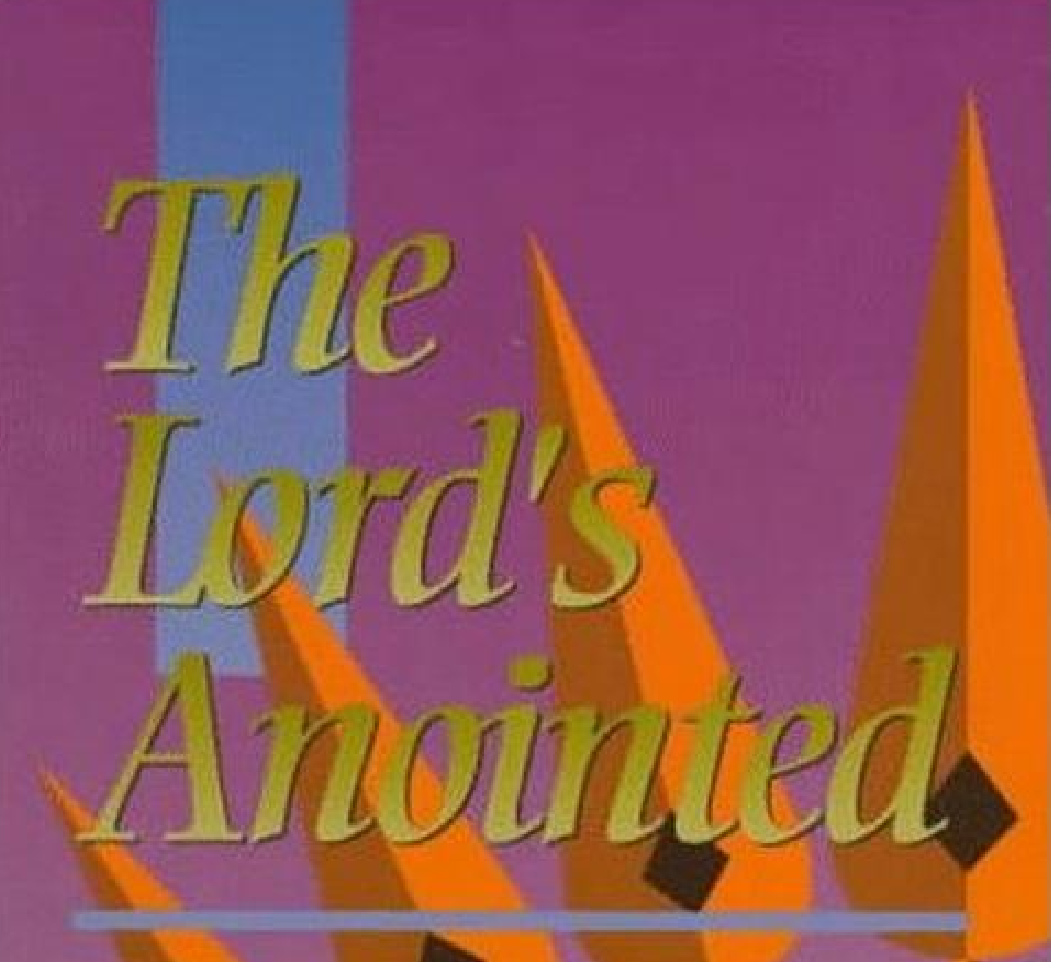


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Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts

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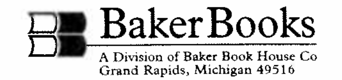
Gordon J. Wenham

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THE PATERNOSTER PRESS
CARLISLE



First published 1995 jointly by
The Paternoster Press
P.O. Box 300, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 0QS U.K.
and by
Baker Book House
Box 6287, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49516-6287 U.S.A.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Lord's Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts
I. Satterthwaite, Philip E.
221.6

ISBN 0-85364-685-6

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Cataloging-in-Publication data is on file at the Library of Congress,
Washington D.C.

ISBN 0-8010-2087-5

Typeset by Tyndale House, Cambridge
and printed by Eerdmans Printing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan,
for the publishers

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EDITORS' PREFACE

It has been a delight to be involved with the production of this collection of essays on messianic texts in the Old Testament. Like its predecessor, *He Swore an Oath: Biblical Themes from Genesis 12-50,* this work began as one of the annual Tyndale Old Testament Study Groups, in this case the 1994 conference. A number of the papers given at that Study Group form the core of the present volume. Others were solicited to provide a more complete survey of the most important Old Testament texts. The editors are grateful to each of the contributors for the time and effort they devoted to the preparation and presentation of their work. This collection reflects the concerns of many scholars who represent a new generation of those committed to the work and ministry of interpreting the Old Testament.

The editors would also like to express appreciation to the Tyndale Fellowship for hosting the Old Testament Study Group as part of the 1994 Swanwick joint conference, and to Tyndale House for help in the production of the volume. We also thank Eileen Satterthwaite for compiling the indexes.

The essays in this volume build upon the work of previous scholars. Among these we would like particularly to mention Rev. F. Derek Kidner. His sensitivity to the Biblical text and appreciation of so many of the concerns that run through this volume are evident in his valuable studies on Genesis, Psalms and other Old Testament books. These appeared at a critical time, when Evangelical commentaries were too few and there was an urgent need for evidence of this commitment in a scholarship that engaged with the critical and theological concerns of the day. In appreciation for Derek Kidner's work, we dedicate this volume of essays to him.

Richard S. Hess
Philip E. Satterthwaite
Gordon J. Wenham

29th August, 1995.

CHAPTER 1

MESSIANIC INTERPRETATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN MODERN CONTEXT

J. Gordon McConville

Summary

Modern study has affected messianic interpretation of the Old Testament in a number of ways. Biblical criticism challenged the validity of many traditional 'messianic' texts. In doing so, however, it merely highlighted the exegetical and hermeneutical questions involved in articulating what might constitute messianism. The discussion implies a theological commitment. Twentieth-century Old Testament theology (von Rad, Eichrodt) put messianism back on the scholarly agenda. Contrary trends, however, stressing creation theology for example, are now prevalent. And Jewish-Christian ecumenical interpretation has raised old questions in a new way. A treatment of messianism as a historical phenomenon shows that messianic interpretation is a dialogue between text and experience. The challenge to Christian interpretation is to contend for its belief that the Old Testament gives a real basis to the New Testament's proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah.

I. Introduction

The present volume aims to reconsider the extent to which the Old Testament may be said to cherish a 'messianic' hope. Its topic, therefore, is one that is central to Christian theology and interpretation. No doubt for that reason it has been the subject of intense debate of different kinds. In the Church's earliest days it had to debate with the Synagogue whether Jesus was the expected Messiah. And in more recent times questions of a critical nature have been raised against the Christian belief that the Old Testament bears the promise of Christ.

Our study, therefore, scarcely needs apology. If the Old Testament is *the* problem of Christian theology, as has been said, the Messiah is at the heart of that problem; it was arguably the conviction that Old Testament promises were fulfilled in Christ that kept it within the Christian canon in spite of what seemed to some to be good arguments for dispensing with it. Christian scholarship is bound to return again and again to the questions of the relationship between the testaments, and especially of the validity of its claims about the Old Testament's messianic character. There is a strong case for a return to the topic at this particular time, because of developments in ways of reading the Old Testament, and because the topic as such has not attracted special study very recently. This has perhaps been because of a preoccupation with problems of methodology. The present set of essays, therefore, aims to begin to redress this deficiency, and to acknowledge that the topic of the Messiah should be of foremost importance for Christian scholarship on the Old Testament.

II. The Messiah in Modern Old Testament Study

Common to all modern treatments of the idea of the Messiah in the Old Testament is the recognition that it cannot be tied to the occurrence of the term מָשִׁיחַ ('anointed one'), which is not used in its later technical sense in the Old Testament. The question whether there is messianism in the Old Testament, therefore, has to seek other criteria than strictly terminological ones. This is true of both traditional Christian messianic and modern critical interpretations.

Modern Old Testament scholarship has been largely informed by the belief that traditional Christian messianic interpretations of Old Testament passages have been exegetically indefensible. The classic

work on the subject by S. Mowinckel rehearses in detail the traditional texts, carefully excluding many from consideration on the grounds that their original meanings had nothing to do with the hope of deliverance by an eschatological Messiah.[1] For example, the saying in Numbers 24:15-19, concerning a 'star' and 'sceptre' that would come out of Israel, was merely a poem 'in honour of Israel', referring in particular to the future supremacy of David and the tribe of Judah. It looked no further than that, and therefore could not be messianic.

Mowinckel may be said to be representative of modern criticism in the sense that it has insisted on the need to understand texts first of all in their own terms. Yet it is clear that this basic belief by no means settles the question whether the Old Testament contains messianic hope, or indeed precisely where and in what form it might be found. These questions remained open. Mowinckel himself criticized older works by Gressmann and Sellin, who had maintained that eschatology and the idea of the Messiah were ancient in Israel.[2] His own work was not concerned to deny these aspects of Old Testament thought in principle; on the contrary, he found a number of 'authentic' messianic texts, characterized by explicit eschatological hope.[3]

His work is devoted, rather, to developing a particular thesis concerning them. This, in brief, is that messianism and eschatology, which he thinks belong inextricably together, were not known in the pre-exilic period, and that the royal ideology of the Psalms focuses only on the political hopes associated with the contemporary or newly enthroned king. For him, the Davidic ideal in the Royal Psalms was cultic in nature, and the Psalms '... do not speak of a future, much less an eschatological, Messiah, but of the contemporary, earthly king of David's line who has just been enthroned'.[4] Eschatology arises only after the exile when the former royal establishment has been destroyed. And messianic hope is expressed in texts found in the prophetic books, but post-exilic in origin.

Not all have accepted Mowinckel's reconstruction, in respect either of his view that messianism arose only after the exile,[5] or his

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[1]S. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (ET; Oxford: Blackwell, 1959) 12-13. The texts include Gn. 3:15; the Royal Psalms; other Psalms (such as Ps. 22); Nu. 24:15-19; Gn. 49:8-12.
[2]*Ibid.*, 14.
[3]*Ibid.*, 15-16.
[4]*Ibid.*, 12. *Cf.* A. Bentzen, *King and Messiah* (ET; London: Lutterworth, 1955), who sees the king's enthronement as 'a repetition of a primeval act'; 17.

view of the nature of the pre-exilic royal ideology. A.R. Johnson, for example, in his study of sacral kingship, which has aspects in common with that of Mowinckel, lays some stress on its eschatological nature.[6] A. Bentzen too questioned whether a definite distinction between 'cultic' and 'eschatological' could be maintained.[7] G. von Rad, while granting that the extravagant epithets attached to the king articulated something about the existing world-order, in continuity with the Ancient near East, admitted: 'We do not know whether those who did homage to them (the newly enthroned kings) were filled with real confidence, or whether they already had their doubts and were asking, "Art thou he who is to come, or are we to wait for another?"'[8] C. Westermann, furthermore, found an important eschatological element in the very act of praise. The praise of Israel evokes a praise that is yet to be given. And this 'praise in expectation' has its context in 'the expectation of the Old Testament (which) is fulfilled in Jesus Christ'.[9] And H.H. Rowley was another important advocate of an eschatological view of the Royal Psalms.[10]

The difference between Mowinckel and others on this issue illustrates the complexity of the attempt to interpret the Old Testament on the subject of the Messiah. The data may be read in different ways, depending on how one judges rather elusive and nuanced matters. The question whether the longing for an ideal king in Israel constitutes 'eschatology' or 'messianism' may not be open to demonstration, but may in the end be a matter of judgement. Mowinckel himself, agreeing that the roots of eschatology lie in the pre-exilic aspirations, is hardly convincing when he tries to show a transition from non-eschatological thought to eschatological.

The issue which we have just aired is merely one instance of what emerges as our first important point, namely that evaluations of

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[5]J. Day thinks that Messianic expectation had its origin before the exile, though he favours a non-eschatological interpretation of the Psalms generally; *The Psalms* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990) 91, *cf.* 97.

[6]A.R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955) 131-134.

[7]*Cf.* Bentzen, who says that the difference between cultic and eschatological interpretations of the Enthronement Psalms is not very great: 'The Psalms experience...what Eschatology expects'; *King and Messiah*, 37.

[8]G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* Vol. I (ET; London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962) 324; and see 318-324.

[9]C. Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (ET; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1965) 161-162.

[10]H.H. Rowley, *Worship in Ancient Israel* (London: SPCK, 1967) 199-202.

messianism in the Old Testament are bound closely to the task of exegesis and interpretation. Recent study of the Deuteronomic History also makes this clear. Since Martin Noth's thesis that this large block of Old Testament material aimed only to demonstrate to Judah why judgement had fallen upon it, critical discussion has focused on the question whether it did contain, *pace* Noth, any form of hope for the future. And von Rad, one of Noth's first critics, pointed to the importance of 2 Samuel 7 and related texts for interpreting the history, ascribing its presence there to a 'Messianic cycle of conceptions', which had forced its way into deuteronomic thinking.[11] Decisions of this sort may be the result of a certain interplay between exegetical judgement and a theological instinct regarding the basic nature of the Old Testament.

The differences which we have noted are revealing. They show that, even within the framework of critical enquiry, there is no unanimity about what might constitute the basic data of messianism. There is no agreed corpus of 'messianic' texts, nor is there a single *type* of text to which the enquiry must be limited (despite Mowinckel's opinion to the contrary. If the Royal Psalms are allowed to have an eschatological aspect, the concept of what might be regarded as messianic is quite different from Mowinckel's belief that it can be found only in explicit promises of a future deliverance). There is therefore much scope for the interpreter, as s/he judges what might constitute messianism in the Old Testament. Decisions are inevitably informed by many factors, not least a basic understanding of the nature of the Old Testament: is it essentially 'expectant'? And how may its (ancient Israelite) texts be used for Christian theology?

III. Messianism and Modern Old Testament Theology

We have observed that critical enquiry is not by definition inimical to the idea of the Messiah in the Old Testament. Yet some basic methodological questions have been raised which have to do with the way in which Old Testament study itself is conceived. A few remarks will be in place, therefore, about trends in Old Testament study which might have a bearing on the interpretation of the Messiah.

The century's classics in Old Testament theology, the works of

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[11]M. Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (ET; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981); G. von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (ET; London: SCM, 1953) 89.

von Rad and Eichrodt, were favourable to the idea of a relationship between the two testaments. Von Rad's category of salvation-history stressed the sense of forward movement and expectation in the Old Testament, and found its conclusion, in his view, in Jesus Christ, the last of God's great acts of salvation. Eichrodt's cross-sectional approach to Old Testament Theology, while it appeared less hospitable on the surface to 'fulfilment' ideas, found in its organizing idea of 'covenant' a mechanism for affirming them. These works were steps towards the Christianising of Old Testament Theology, following decades in which scholarship had explicitly or implicitly declared the Old Testament to be less or other than Christian.

Further developments in Old Testament theology have tended to turn attention away from 'fulfilment' models. In particular 'salvation-history' has widely been seen as an inadequate key to understanding the Old Testament, because it cannot easily embrace all the types of material contained there. Indeed there has been in some treatments a new emphasis on aspects of the Old Testament which focus, not on the story of salvation, but on the relationship between God and his people in the regularities of life, and indeed the relationship between God and the world as such. An example is C. Westermann's focus on the concept of 'blessing' as a significant and previously underestimated dimension of Old Testament theology.[12] This tends to highlight the pole of 'creation' as opposed to redemption.

These corrective trends do not in themselves negate the idea of the Old Testament as expectant. Westermann, indeed, traces the idea of blessing from Old Testament roots into the New Testament and shows that, where blessing had once been bestowed by Yahweh on Israel, it was now transferred to Christ: 'God's bestowal of blessing became connected with God's work in Christ.'[13] The theme of blessing, therefore, though it is seen as a balance to an exaggerated emphasis on salvation, is nevertheless subject to historical development and even fulfilment in Christ. Westermann has elsewhere shown how Jesus' teaching was imbued with Wisdom thinking.[14] Furthermore, John Goldingay, drawing attention to the separate themes of creation and redemption in the Old Testament, has shown how the two might be

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[12]C. Westermann, *Blessing in the Bible and the Life of the Church* (ET; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978). Von Rad himself tried to redress the balance in his work on the Old Testament in his separate work on the Wisdom literature; von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (ET; London: SCM, 1972).
[13]*Ibid.*, 65.
[14]Westermann, *The Parables of Jesus* (ET; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1990).

theologically integrated.[15] This rather recent tendency in Old Testament studies has echoes of the somewhat older tension perceived between cultic and eschatological religion, observed a little earlier.

There is, however, a slightly different strain in modern thought about Old Testament. This is the trend towards claiming the Old Testament for various kinds of what might be called 'interested' readings, that is, those which read the Old Testament through the spectacles of a particular interest group. These take various forms and are associated in greater or lesser degrees with traditional Christian belief. But in common is their commitment to an agenda which influences the processes of selection and interpretation. An interesting feature of some of these interpretations is their stress on the 'creation' end of the creation-redemption polarity. Some feminist interpretations are a case in point. Phyllis Trible, notably, has seen the creation declaration 'male and female he created them' (Gn. 1:27) as a key to reading not only the creation narratives but the whole Old Testament, from her declared perspective of a 'feminist critique of culture'.[16] The effect of the pursuit of this particular agenda, therefore, is to divert attention from the Old Testament as expectant, a story of salvation. Trible's focus on Genesis 2:17, indeed, makes a significant contrast with the high point which traditional Christian interpretation identifies in the creation narratives, namely Genesis 3:15, the promise (as it is held) of a saviour of the world from sin.

One particularly interesting recourse to Old Testament creation theology—for our present purpose—occurs in what might be called the ecumenical reading of the Old Testament. This is exemplified by R. Rendtorff, who has stressed the importance of creation as a means of effecting *rapprochement* between Christian and Jewish interpretation. In a collection which brings together a number of more or less recent essays his dominant theme is the need, as he puts it, 'to free the Hebrew Bible from the captivity into which it was brought when it came to be labelled merely a preliminary step, now superseded and overcome, on the way to the Christian Bible.'[17] The volume is thus, in part at least, a renunciation of the Christian preoccupation with the prophetic (=redemptive, salvation-history) strain in the Old Testament at the expense of its theology of creation.

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[15]John Goldingay, *Theological Diversity and the Authority of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 200-239.
[16]Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (London: SCM, 1978) 12-23, *cf.* 7-8.
[17]R. Rendtorff, *Canon and Theology Overtures to an Old Testament Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 218.

Rendtorff believes, furthermore, that even critical scholarship since Wellhausen has denigrated the Jewishness of the Old Testament. And his laudable concern for reconciliation between Christians and Jews has led him to declare that the Church has no exclusive claim on the Old Testament. The Old Testament is *in itself* a revelation of God.

Rendtorff's later position on the Old Testament is interesting for a number of reasons, not least for the recantation it involves from his earlier association with the Pannenberg group and its assertion of God's revelation 'in history' whose end is revealed proleptically in Christ.[18] It makes a telling contrast with Mowinckel's classic, which by Rendtorff's criteria emerges as strongly orthodox in terms of Christian interpretation. But it is most interesting as a reemergence, in striking form, of the ancient dilemma of the Old Testament: to whom does it belong, Church or synagogue? Rendtorff often appears to hesitate between simply allowing that the two claims are irreconcilable (but equally valid) and implying that the Church's interpretation has actually got it wrong. (His strictures on the traditional Christian reading of Jeremiah's New Covenant again makes an interesting contrast with Mowinckel). His dilemma, perhaps, cannot be resolved, and illustrates the real problem of the Old Testament—its call to a commitment of one kind or another.

The preceding brief and necessarily selective survey has aimed to put the investigation of the Messiah in the Old Testament in the context of modern study. It has shown a number of things. First, the idea of the Messiah has been seriously affected by tendencies in scholarship, which (at least until relatively recently) have stressed the importance of 'original' meanings, and frequently found that Old Testament texts which had been traditionally considered messianic were not so, but bore upon contemporary situations. Secondly, however, Old Testament scholarship was seen to manifest quite divergent tendencies, with some strands remaining closer to the traditional position than others. Mowinckel, though he narrowed the basis of messianic theology in the Old Testament, still operated with a strong idea of messianic expectation in it. And other critical scholars found even stronger messianic tendencies than he. In contrast to these, however, some modern work departed radically from the idea of the Old Testament as expectant. This was true of the many works which attempted to reread the Old Testament in pursuit of various kinds of social analysis. Thirdly, some modern readings reopened in a new

[18]W. Pannenberg (ed.), *Revelation as History* (ET; London: Sheed and Ward, 1969).

form the old debate concerning the real 'ownership' of the Old Testament, the Church or the synagogue.

Our survey suggests the question whether or how far the Old Testament may convincingly be shown to be messianic. Is a messianic reading just one among others, having no claim to possess a special validity? Or is it the task of Christian scholarship to try to show that, in a modern context too, a messianic reading of the Old Testament is compelling? The question involves us necessarily in hermeneutical considerations, to which we shall turn shortly. As a prelude to that, however, we must first look more closely at what is meant by messianism.

IV. What is Messianism?

Messianism, on most accounts, is a phenomenon that arises only in the late Old Testament period, and that reaches its full development in the century or so either side of the birth of Christ; indeed it is in the context of a rather widespread Jewish messianic expectation that Jesus is hailed as the Christ. The term 'Messiah' itself arises, as is well known, from the Hebrew משח ('anoint'), which is used widely in the Old Testament for the anointing of kings, prophets and others to their divinely given tasks. As such, therefore, it is originally a rather general term, not yet specialized into a name for the deliverer sent by God, who would become the focus of Jewish hope in the post-exilic period.[19]

As we have already seen, however, the topic is much broader than the simple issue of the changing connotations of a single word. To locate the full-blown movement only late in the period and literature which we are interested in does not in itself answer the important questions about the roots of ideas and the legitimacy of interpretations. If messianism is late it may nevertheless have sound credentials. One aspect of the enquiry, therefore, must be to consider whether there are continuities between the Jewish literature extant at the time of Christ and various parts of the Old Testament. With that in mind, we begin by considering briefly the historical context of messianism as it is usually understood in modern scholarship.

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[19]It occurs in Dn. 9:25-26, apparently in its developed technical sense, but its meaning there is unclear; see the further comments in M. Selman's essay in this volume.

1. Messianism in Judaism

How widespread was messianic expectation in later Judaism? To those weaned on the New Testament, with its pictures of Jesus' triumphal progress towards Jerusalem amid the exultation of expectant crowds, it comes as a surprise to find that there is a good deal of contemporary Jewish literature which has little or no overt messianic expectation. A distinction is sometimes made between those Jewish books which exhibit such hope and those which do not, the latter including virtually all of the Old Testament Apocrypha. In books like Tobit and Judith the focus is on the business of living and surviving as a faithful Jew in a hostile pagan environment rather than on hopes of dramatic deliverance. And Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus is often thought to have features of what would later become Sadduceanism, with its emphasis on the Torah and its denial of a resurrection.[20]

A range of other books, however, show signs of messianic expectation. These include some works found at Qumran (Dead Sea Scrolls), the Psalms of Solomon, Josephus and certain apocalyptic works.[21] The problem for interpreters is then to know how far messianic expectation might be regarded as typical of Judaism at the turn of the eras. How far do the extant books enable us to build up a profile of Judaism at large? Are some more representative than others? And could it be that some of those which express no overt hope betray signs of it in the subsoil of their thought?[22]

Having reviewed the literature in question, along with some general historical circumstances, N.T. Wright concludes that messianism was rather more widespread than one might suppose on the basis of certain Jewish literature. The evidence is to some extent circumstantial. There were messianic movements in the period 66-70 CE, according to Josephus, followed again by bar-Kochba (132-135), whose claims apparently had Davidic overtones.[23] Herod has been thought to have aimed to imitate Solomon. And the New Testament itself, with its Davidic language about Jesus, forms part of the bigger picture.[24] In the portrayal of Judaism offered by Wright, Jewish

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[20]Bruce M. Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York: OUP, 1977) 87.
[21]N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992) 319.
[22]So W. Horbury, who notes patriotic elements in general in the Apocrypha, and certain Davidic and temple themes in particular (Jdt. 15:9; 16:18-20; 1 Mac. 2:57); (seminar at Oxford, and forthcoming book). See also *idem.*, 'The Messianic Associations of the "Son of Man"', *Journal of Theological Studies* 36 (1985) 34-55.
[23]Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 308-309.
[24]*Ibid.*, 308-310.

consciousness is informed by a 'story' which involves God's ultimate redemption of the nation, and in which the messianic idea is readily accommodated and often actually surfaces.

If Judaism between the testaments is to a large degree messianic, this has a bearing on our question to what extent the Old Testament contains messianic hopes. For a messianic Judaism must have its roots somewhere, and it is natural to suppose that the place to look for them is the Old Testament. This favours the view, superficially at least, that messianic expectation was present in post-exilic Old Testament literature (the view of Mowinckel). The point is significant, because it is hotly debated to what extent there is evidence of such expectation at that time. There is a school of thought which considers that messianic expectation was at best marginal in the post-exilic period, the dominant viewpoint being the priestly, theocratic position represented (*ex hypothesi*) by Chronicles and the Priestly literature.[25] Yet here the corpus of literature on which a judgement must be based is small, the evidence is finely balanced, and the interpreter is called upon to look carefully not only at the lines but between them.[26]

A further caveat, which we have already noted, is that messianic hope in the Old Testament does not in any case come fully formed. Messianism as a phenomenon takes various forms, and indeed our information about it is imperfect. Our attempt to say something about the Messiah in the Old Testament, therefore, does not begin with comprehensive and clearly defined data about what 'Messiah' connotes. Any attempt to reconstruct the lines of Old Testament messianic expectation will require sensitivity to a range of overtones.

2. *The Old Testament and Jewish and Christian Messianism*

Now that we have made some observations about messianism as a phenomenon, our next question is a hermeneutical one. The historical phenomenon is closely bound up with self-understandings that arise from readings of the Old Testament Scriptures. Messianism is essentially hermeneutical; it is about understanding God's purposes, as revealed, and as bearing upon history now, for 'us'. But how does the relationship between text and 'messianic' community work?

The promise-fulfilment model (implicit in Old Testament

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[25]O. Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology* (ET; Richmond: John Knox, 1968); P.D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975).
[26]See further B. Kelly's essay on Chronicles in this volume.

prophecy and taken up in the New Testament) might lead us to expect that the dynamic is a simple one: the Old Testament makes certain promises, later communities read and understand them, and see their fulfilment in history. On this model we might suppose that the people of Jesus' day simply expected what the Bible had led them to expect. To an extent this is true. As we have seen, Jewish messianism had a marked Davidic colour, to take the most obvious point. However, the reality is not so simple as this might suggest. The interpretation of the Old Testament is not a one-way street, but a two-way flow, in which contemporary situations were compared with the Scriptures, and the Scriptures were then brought to bear, sometimes in (to us) unexpected ways, on the situations. The Old Testament, indeed, underwent a good deal of reinterpretation even as hopes of deliverance were being worked out. The Biblical interpreters at Qumran afford an obvious example of this, with their readings of the Scriptures in such a way as to see themselves as the eschatological community.[27]

To make this observation is to do little more than draw attention to a commonplace of modern thinking about interpretation. People bring a certain pre-understanding to the reading of texts, which informs how they read them; the text in turn exercises an influence on the reader, whose 'pre-understanding' is thus slightly modified as s/he continues to read. And the process can continue in what is known as the 'hermeneutical circle'. Such an understanding of how texts are heard and appropriated sheds some light on what was happening at Qumran, as well as on what happens when we ourselves reflect on our own traditions. This does not mean that judgements may not be formed about the greater or lesser persuasiveness, or correctness, of particular views. The modern reader, indeed, may find Qumran exegesis strange and wholly unjustifiable. Yet it is important to understand that their world was one in which the appropriation of Scripture had urgent importance; Scripture was the backcloth to issues of life and death, and it was read and searched with the greatest urgency.

The relevance of these observations to our own interpretation of the Messiah in the Old Testament should be clear. Inasmuch as we come to the topic as a strand in *Biblical* theology—the Old Testament in relation to the New—we are bound to recognize that the New Testament writers belonged to the same world as the exegetes of

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[27]See the essay of P. Jenson in the present volume for the complex relationship between a text and the understanding of its fulfilment.

Qumran and other Jews. Christian appropriation of the promises of a Messiah do not avoid the basic dynamics of hermeneutics. The early Church was Jewish first of all, and the intellectual and religious assumptions of its first members were (at least in the beginning) the same as those of other Jews. In principle, therefore, the same factors come into play as with other messianic interpretations. The first Christians matched their inherited expectations to their new experience and self-understanding, and read the promises of the Old Testament as fulfilled in Jesus.

It bears repeating that these things are not said to suggest that various readings have merely relative importance. It does mean, though, that claims to represent the true interpretation of texts and traditions need to be contended for. That, of course, is precisely what the New Testament does, and indeed subsequent Christian interpretation too. Arguably any discussion of the Messiah, therefore, has a history in committed dialogue, and belongs within a discourse of persuasion. True interpretations, furthermore, are worth contending for.

3. *The Messiah and New Testament Interpretation of the Old*

It should be clear from the above that our understanding of the Messiah in the Old Testament belongs within the larger study of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. The nature of that relationship is not easy to pin down and various models have been advanced to try to articulate it.[28] What is clear, however, is that the exercise is one of *theology*. That is, the New Testament is reading the Old Testament in an engaged way, because of its certainty that Jesus is the Messiah. Furthermore, it avails itself of contemporary techniques of interpretation in doing so, in a way which can be disconcerting to the modern Christian reader.

Specifically, texts that are interpreted of Jesus in the New Testament do not appear to be 'messianic' predictions when read in their original Old Testament contexts. Matthew's rendering of Hosea's 'Out of Egypt I have called my son' (Ho. 11:1) is a case in point. When Hosea wrote the line he had in mind God's calling of his 'son' Israel out of slavery in Egypt. When Matthew lines it up with the return of the child Jesus from his Egyptian refuge on the death of Herod (Mt. 2:15), he is scarcely claiming that that is what Hosea actually had in mind.

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[28]For an authoritative survey see D.L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible* (2nd ed; Leicester: Apollos, 1991).

Rather, he is asserting that there is a true connection, at a deep level, between the two events.

It might be thought that we are on safer ground with explicit predictions. However, predictions which have been taken messianically in the New Testament do not necessarily fit the mould of promised Davidic king in the Old. The famous Immanuel prophecy (Is. 7:14) is a case in point, since it is not at all clear that it referred to a royal child, and appears to have its fulfilment in the immediate context of Ahaz' reign. If this text originally had messianic overtones, it requires careful demonstration. Mowinckel attempted such a demonstration, appealing to the significance generally of royal births in the ancient Near East (though there he had to assume the 'young woman' in the prophetic sign was Ahaz' queen), and to alleged Canaanite mythological associations, which postulated a connection between the birth of a god to the 'virgin' Anath and royal births; these latter, in his view, were evidently understood by the Jewish translators of the LXX when they rendered עַלְמָה by παρθένος This line of argument, however, has not found general acceptance.[29] If the saying is to be shown to have been messianic in intent, other ways must be found of doing so. The traditional argument that the noun עַלְמָה actually meant 'virgin' is another possible avenue, which has been recently explored again by J.A. Motyer.[30] This study raises two issues, however. First, it poses the question of the precise nature of Old Testament 'prediction'. Does the validity of the messianic interpretation of the sign given to Ahaz depend on a demonstration that the noun עַלְמָה actually meant 'virgin' to Isaiah and his hearers? Or does the messianic understanding of what Isaiah said arise in the course of hearing and reflecting on the passage? The second issue is exegetical: how does the prophecy concerning this child relate to the context of Isaiah 7-9 in general, and in particular the several children with significant names who feature there? Answers to these questions should be part of a full explanation of how the prophecy is messianic.

A number of essays in the present collection address issues of this sort. Johnston and Heim, for example, argue (in slightly different ways) that Psalms 16 and 72 respectively, though explicable entirely within an Old Testament context, have features which suggest or encourage messianic reinterpretation. And Jenson examines the way

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[29]Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 114-119. Contrast R.E. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1980) 86, who argues that the child is the prophet's own.

[30]J.A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Leicester: IVP, 1993), 84-86.

in which a traditional messianic text, Micah 5:2(1), has become capable of bearing messianic meaning, though it did not originally do so.

There are, of course, predictions that are more transparently messianic, in the sense that they hold out an express hope of a restored Davidic monarchy (Is. 9:6-7; 11:1; Je. 23:5-6 *etc.*).[31] With these, Mowinckel thought that he was on the firmest ground. However, even here, a case has to be made for the transition from the mix of spiritual and political hopes to hopes which might be seen to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The political dimension in these prophecies should not be underestimated, for the predictions of a restored monarchy often go hand in hand with what look like nationalistic, or at least thoroughly 'Jewish', elements (especially the temple, the land; *e.g.*, Je. 33:19-22; Ezk. 34:23-24; 36:8-12). This awkward fact has led to unfortunate misappropriations of prophecy in our day, with unhappy consequences for Christian consciousness, and conscience, in relation to Palestine. A suitable appropriation of even these clearly messianic prophecies still has to pass through a rather subtle theological process.

In the face of data such as these the modern reader may well ask whether s/he has any hope of discovering 'real' messianism in the Old Testament. To put it pessimistically, are not such connections made between the Old Testament and the New Testament and Christian theology arbitrary, or at least beyond the wit of the modern mind to fathom? To put a different slant on it, in terms of a theology of Scripture, are such connections irreducibly the product of divine inspiration, and simply to be accepted by faith?

V. Conclusions

In the light of the foregoing a number of points may be made in general about a study of the topic of the Messiah in the Old Testament. First, there are fundamental issues of interpretation, which have to do with how one views Scripture. Messianism might be regarded simply as a phenomenon of Israelite religion. Alternatively it may be seen as a prominent motif in the Old Testament because the Scriptures, under divine inspiration, witness to the coming of Christ. This basic tenet leaves open a number of specific exegetical and hermeneutical options. It does not necessitate, for example, fanciful christological readings. It leaves open the question how precisely future events may be said to

[31]See the essay of Dan Schibler, below.

have been foreseen or predicted. On the other hand it may well be a line from sacral kingship, for example, to messianic hope, and if so the interpreter must try to understand the world of religious ideas in which the Old Testament is located. This implies a further question of interpretation, namely the extent of the Old Testament's openness to foreign ideas.

Secondly, Christian messianic interpretation requires an understanding of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. We have seen that that relationship is not simply, certainly not entirely, a matter of specific promises finding fulfilment. The history of salvation which begins to be told in the Old Testament and which comes to its completion in Christ is discerned in ways that go deeper than that. When the New Testament writers found fulfilments of Old Testament events and sayings in Christ, they were seeing correspondences between them that had to do with the way in which God relates fundamentally to the world. Some have spoken of 'typology' to articulate connections of this sort.[32] Christ brings to completion the reality of salvation as it has been desired and partly experienced for ages past. Conversely, messianic expectation may express such intuitions and desires in a wide variety of ways, without necessarily seeing beforehand the precise shape in which fulfilment would eventually come.

For this reason, incidentally, foreshadowings of Christ may be discerned in a variety of ways, and not just in express predictions. One possible category is personalities of the Old Testament. Is Joshua a messianic figure, for example, or Solomon, or Elisha (see Provan)? The danger of fanciful christological interpretation may seem to lie close here, and claims of this sort need justification. Yet subject to the criteria just mentioned it may be right to see messianism in them. This is one illustration of the range of ways in which the Old Testament might be said to be messianic.

Thirdly, there is the central issue of the interpretation of specific texts. How does one 'decide' a text? Here the scenery has changed considerably since Mowinckel's days, because the literary- and historical-critical means which were available to him are now widely considered to be too narrow a basis on which to decide meaning. Canonical criticism and the newer approach to literary

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[32]See D.L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible* (2nd ed; Leicester: Apollos, 1991) 179-299, for a careful treatment of the nature of typology and its relation to fulfilment. And see again Jenson, below.

criticism have brought new contextual possibilities into interpretation. Central questions in the discussion of the topic of the Messiah (and any other topic) are in principle reopened by this. P. Satterthwaite's study of the Books of Samuel is an attempt to do this for the interpretation of David in those books.

Other factors are also present when an interpreter decides on an interpretation of a text. An interpreter's general view of the topic will inevitably have an influence on his or her reading of a particular text. If I think, for example, that messianism is essentially a post-exilic phenomenon I am likely to date texts that seem to me to be messianic in that period; and conversely, texts which I think are pre-exilic I am unlikely to see as messianic. Some such relationship between general theory and the evaluation of the details is inevitable. It may be formed in part by factors which are not immediately exegetical or theological. For example, one might judge on the basis of ordinary probability that messianism is likely to have arisen only after the end of the kingdom. (Others, of course, may judge otherwise). For this sort of reason, however, interpreters have to be particularly careful to ensure that the theory remains open to testing.

Finally, the above discussion shows that there is ample warrant for the ongoing study of the topic of the Messiah from within the Old Testament. Such a study can hardly be *exclusively* an Old Testament study, since the agenda has been set from outside it. Yet we have seen, I think, that the interpretation of this essentially Old Testament-New Testament issue is by no means entirely formed by the New. An understanding of the Old Testament's contribution to the theme involves a genuine two-way process (between Old and New). The validity of a Christian understanding of the Old Testament must depend in the last analysis on cogency of the argument that the Old Testament *is* messianic. In this sense the present volume is a contribution to an old argument. Yet the argument needs always to be remade, since its backcloth in Old Testament studies constantly changes. The attempt to do this involves a number of specific interpretative issues, some of which are addressed in the pages that follow. The essays are not necessarily univocal in their understanding of the hermeneutics of messianism. In that sense there are elements of internal dialogue here. That too, however, is offered as a constructive contribution to the theme.

CHAPTER 2

MESSIANIC IDEOLOGY IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

T. Desmond Alexander

Summary

Recent studies have tended to reject the long-standing view that Genesis 3:15 and 49:8-12 are important passages concerning the Old Testament portrayal of the Messiah. Taking Genesis as a unified literary work, there are, however, substantial grounds for believing that messianic ideology permeates not only these verses but also the entire work. Central to this is the recognition that the writer of Genesis focuses on a unique line of 'seed' from which will arise a king of the tribe of Judah through whom all nations will be blessed. This future king will be responsible for the restoration of 'Edenic' conditions upon earth and the overthrow of the powers of evil. Genesis 3:15 and 49:8-12 are vital components of this overall picture.

I. Introduction

For the majority of contemporary biblical scholars the book of Genesis has little or nothing to say about the Messiah or associated concepts. This is reflected both in studies devoted specifically to the topic of the Messiah[1] and commentaries on Genesis itself.[2] Two main factors may account for this situation. First, neither the noun מָשִׁיחַ ('Messiah', 'anointed one') nor the verb משׁח ('to anoint') is used in Genesis to denote a royal figure.[3] Also, the few passages which have in the past been viewed as messianic (*i.e.*, 3:15; 49:8-12)[4] are now generally considered to be non-messianic in nature. Second, the expectation of a unique future king or Messiah is commonly assumed to be a late development in Israelite thinking, possibly arising as a result of the demise of the Davidic monarchy at the time of the Babylonian exile in the sixth century BC. The book of Genesis, however, focuses on the very earliest period of Israelite history, centuries before any monarch ever ruled the nation. There is little reason, therefore, to expect that Genesis would deal with a concept which only arose many years later.

Yet, in spite of these considerations, this study aims to show that messianic ideology permeates the book of Genesis. It will be argued that any assessment of what the Old Testament has to teach about the coming of a future king or Messiah must include a careful consideration of the Genesis narrative; to ignore its contents is to overlook an important contribution to messianic thought in the Old Testament.

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[1]*E.g.*, J. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel from its Beginnings to the Completion of the Mishnah* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956); S. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956); H. Ringgren, *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Studies in Biblical Theology; London: SCM, 1956); A. Bentzen, *King and Messiah* (2nd ed; Oxford: Blackwell, 1970); J. Becker, *Messianic Expectation in the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1980); M. de Jonge, 'Messiah', ABD 4:777-88. The most notable exception to this trend is G. van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990).

[2]For example, in Westermann's detailed and extensive three-volume commentary on Genesis discussion of the Messiah or messianic age is restricted to three passages: 3:15; 9:20 and 48:8-12. Commenting on 9:20 Westermann (*Genesis 1-11*, [London: SPCK, 1984] 487) observes briefly that 'the vine and its fruit became the sign of the blessed life in the messianic era.' As regards 3:15 and 48:8-12, we shall consider in more detail below Westermann's arguments for rejecting a messianic reading of these passages.

[3]There is only one occurrence of the root משׁח in Genesis; the verb is used in Gn. 31:13 with reference to the pillar which Jacob anointed at Bethel.

[4]Unless otherwise indicated all biblical references are from the book of Genesis.

While we will attempt to show that the book of Genesis displays features which are clearly associated with messianic concepts found elsewhere in the Old Testament, no attempt will be made here to account for the origin and nature of this relationship. To do so would require a complex traditio-historical investigation with much depending upon the proposed dating of the relevant material. Given especially the present lack of consensus regarding the extent and dating of the sources used in the composition of Genesis, any attempt to reconstruct the history of messianic traditions found both in Genesis and elsewhere would be highly speculative.

Although the noun מָשִׁיחַ ('Messiah') and associated verbal forms are not used in Genesis of royal persons, the present text develops a number of motifs which are prominent in other messianic texts. Foremost among these is the expectation of a divinely appointed king who will play a vital role in mediating God's blessing throughout the earth. Significantly, in Genesis this future king is linked to a royal dynasty descended from the tribe of Judah. Furthermore, the activity of this king is associated with the restoration of the harmonious state which initially existed between God, humanity and nature in the Garden of Eden. In spite of the disobedience of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from Eden, the book of Genesis envisages a time when the consequences of humanity's rebellion against God will be reversed through the mediation of a future monarch. Such ideas clearly find remarkable parallels elsewhere in the Old Testament.[5]

To appreciate the presence of these ideas in Genesis it is necessary to consider the book of Genesis in its received form. Regardless of how we view the process by which Genesis was composed, the present text, as the end product of this process, reflects the outlook of the final author/editor.[6] It is with regard to this final phase that we are concerned to demonstrate the presence of messianic ideology in the book of Genesis.

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[5]The royal Psalms, for example, envisage a king who by the power of God (2:6, 8; 18:46-50; 21:1-13; 110:1-2) overcomes ungodly opponents (2:1-3; 45:3-5; 89:22-23; 110:1) in order to establish his authority over the entire earth (2:8-12; 18:43-45; 45:17; 72:8-11; 89:25; 110:5-6) for all time (21:4; 45:6; 72:5) thereby bringing peace (72:7), prosperity (72:16) and justice to the poor and oppressed (72:2-4, 12-14; *cf.* 45:4, 6-7; 72:7; 101:1-8). Similarly, it is striking that descriptions of the messianic age in Am. 9:13; Is. 4:2; 11:6-9; 32:1-8, 15, 20; 55:13; Ps. 72:7, 16 are reminiscent of the prosperity and peace which existed prior to the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

[6]Hereafter this author/editor is referred to as the 'writer' of Genesis.

II. Major Literary Features in Genesis

As Genesis now stands there are two distinctive literary features which highlight its central message.[7] The first of these is the תּוֹלְדוֹת headings. These headings introduce either narrative sections dealing with the principal characters in Genesis (2:4; 6:9; 11:27; 25:19; 37:2; introducing respectively Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob and Joseph), or genealogical lists (5:1; 10:1; 11:10; 25:12; 36:1,9). Significantly, the genealogies fall into two types: linear (5:1-32; 11:10-26) and segmented (10:1-32; 25:12-18; 36:1-8,9-43).[8] Of these the linear genealogies in chs. 5 and 11 are especially important; in conjunction with the תּוֹלְדוֹת headings they emphasise the existence of a unique family line in Genesis.

The second literary feature is the use of the Hebrew term זֶרַע ('seed') as a *Leitwort* or keyword. The significance of this term is indicated by its unusually high frequency in Genesis; of 231 occurrences in the whole of the Hebrew Bible,[9] it comes 59 times in Genesis. Two aspects of the term זֶרַע should be noted.

(a) זֶרַע may denote either a single seed (*e.g.*, Ishmael is Abraham's seed [21:13]) or many seed (*e.g.*, the seed of Jacob will be as numerous as 'the dust of the earth' [28:14]). Due consideration must be given to both these possibilities when interpreting passages containing the term.

(b) The term זֶרַע implies a close resemblance between progenitor and progeny. This link is underlined initially in 1:11-12 where attention is drawn to the fact that plants and trees produce seeds 'according to their various kinds'. These observations will be developed further below.

Significantly, the way in which the term זֶרַע is used in Genesis complements the תּוֹלְדוֹת headings and linear genealogies. Taken

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[7]Much of the discussion which comes in this and the following section summarizes fuller treatments by the present author in 'From Adam to Judah: the significance of the family tree in Genesis', *EQ* 61 (1989) 5-19; 'Genealogies, Seed and the Compositional Unity of Genesis', *TynB* 44 (1993) 255-70; *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Main Themes of the Pentateuch* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995) 6-18.

[8]On the distinction between linear and segmented genealogies see R.R. Wilson, *Genealogy and History in the Biblical World* (Yale Near Eastern Researches 7; New Haven: Yale UP, 1977) 9. Interestingly, he observes (p. 132) that in the 'politico-jural sphere' Near Eastern genealogies 'are used to legitimate royal and professional officeholders.'

[9]Or 232 if we include the Aramaic word זְרַע in Dn. 2:43.

together these features focus attention on a unique lineage which begins with Adam and concludes with the sons of Israel. This family line forms the backbone of the book.

III. The Family Line in Genesis

When this family line is examined closely various aspects of it are noteworthy. First, the central lineage in Genesis is traced through male descendants and successive members are always clearly indicated. Beginning with Adam, the line then moves from Seth to Noah and his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth (5:1-32). It next proceeds from Shem to Terah and his three sons, Abraham, Nahor and Haran (11:10-26). After this it focuses on Abraham, his son Isaac and grandson Jacob. Finally, Genesis concluded by noting that Jacob had twelve sons. Throughout care is taken to establish accurately the precise line of succession, especially when, contrary to expectation, it is not traced through the first-born son.

Second, the writer of Genesis emphasizes that the existence and continuity of this unique line of descendants is dependent upon God. This is especially apparent in two ways. On the one hand, when the wives of certain members of this lineage are barren, it is God who enables them to have children.[10] Even when there are no apparent barriers to the birth of children, God's role in giving new life is often acknowledged (*e.g.*, 4:2; 29:33; 30:6). On the other hand, although it is normally anticipated that the line of descent will be traced through the first-born son, occasionally God intervenes and specifies that the lineage will be continued through another male child. Thus, Seth the third-born is favoured over Cain the first-born (4:1-25); Isaac, Abraham's second-born son, enjoys priority over Ishmael, the first-born son (16:1-16; 17:18-21; 21:9-20); Esau, the first-born of Isaac, takes a secondary position to his younger twin brother Jacob (25:23). These features indicate that the lineage traced in Genesis is no ordinary line; it is one appointed by God. Moreover, its members enjoy an exceptionally close relationship with God. This is especially apparent in the cases of Noah and Abraham, with whom God makes eternal covenants. However, other members of the family lineage also experience in large measure God's favour and blessing (*e.g.*, Enoch, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph).

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[10]This is so in the cases of Sarah (21:1; *cf.* 17:16; 18:10-14), Rebekah (25:21) and Rachel (30:22-24; *cf.* 29:31; 30:1-2).

Third, the members of the family line often resemble each other. This is in keeping with the observation, made above, that the concept of 'seed' implies a resemblance between the progenitor and the progeny. We see this, for example, when we compare the account of Isaac's stay in Gerar (26:1-35) with that of Abraham (20:1-22:19). Isaac's behaviour mirrors closely that of his father in a number of ways: each pretends that his wife is his sister (20:1-18; 26:1-11); each is involved in a dispute over the ownership of wells (21:22-34; 26:17-22, 26-31); each enters into a covenant relationship with Abimelech king of Gerar (21:22-34; 26:26-31). Elsewhere in Genesis other parallels between members of the same seed may also be observed.[11]

Fourth, the Genesis narrative reveals that there are two main types of human seed. On the one hand, there are those who enjoy a positive relationship with God and experience his blessing. On the other hand, there are those who distance themselves from God by their evil actions and, as a consequence, experience God's displeasure. The existence of these two types is perhaps most evident in the story of Cain and Abel (4:1-16). Although they are brothers, they differ markedly in their attitude towards God. As a result, Cain murders his older brother Abel. Interestingly, when afterwards the writer of Genesis lists the descendants of Cain, his 'unrighteous' line is placed alongside and contrasted with the 'righteous' line of Seth.[12]

Fifth, the writer of Genesis draws attention to an ongoing conflict between the righteous and unrighteous seed. This is clearly illustrated in the account of Cain killing Abel. However, it reappears throughout Genesis, being particularly apparent in the patriarchal narratives. We encounter it first in the divine comment to Abraham: 'I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse' (12:3). It lies at the heart of the narrative in chs. 25-35 regarding the tension which exists between Jacob and Esau. Similarly, the Joseph story centres on the hatred which Joseph's brothers have towards him. Remarkably, many of the conflicts highlighted in Genesis exist between brothers.

Sixth, the Genesis narrative highlights the importance of

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[11]By his murderous actions Lamech mirrors his ancestor Cain (4:19-24); Abraham is encouraged to resemble Noah (*cf.* 6:9 and 17:1); the activities of the Canaanites living in Sodom (19:4-8) resemble those of their ancestor Ham, the father of Canaan (9:21-22).

[12]For a discussion of some interesting parallels between the genealogies in chs. 4 and 5 see R. Hess, 'Lamech in the Genealogies of Genesis', *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 1 (1991) 21-25.

maintaining the purity of the righteous line of seed. Thus, Abraham seeks a suitable wife for Isaac from his relatives in Aram Naharaim rather than from among the Canaanites with whom he is living (24:3-4). Later, Isaac warns Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman; rather he encourages him to find a wife 'from among the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother' (28:1-2).[13] Yet, although these examples suggest that the writer of Genesis commends biological purity, three factors argue against this conclusion.

(a) Biological purity does not guarantee that the children born to righteous parents are themselves righteous. In this regard, it is interesting to note that when in the main lineage the eldest son is passed over in favour of a younger brother the writer always provides some justification for this happening. On each occasion the rejected individual acts in an unrighteous manner.[14]

(b) Although Isaac and Jacob marry relatives, their chosen wives display righteous characteristics. This is most evident in the case of Rebekah who must, like Abraham, leave her family in order to become part of the family line.[15] The same is also true of Rachel. Although biological purity is involved in these cases, of itself it is not enough.

(c) The inclusion of Tamar, presumably a Canaanite,[16] in the family lineage runs counter to an absolute concern for biological purity. Significantly, she is viewed as righteous because of her concern to ensure the continuity of the family line (38:26).

Seventh, the 'seed' of the main family lineage is often associated with the divine promises which are a central component of the patriarchal stories. There are three distinctive aspects to this.

(a) The land of Canaan is divinely promised to the 'seed' of Abraham. This is first mentioned when Abraham arrives in Canaan, 'To your seed I will give this land' (12:7), and repeated frequently to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (13:15; 15:18; 17:8; 22:17; 26:3; 28:13; 35:12; *cf.* 24:7; 24:60; 28:4; 48:4).

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[13]This contrasts sharply with the actions of Esau who marries Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite and Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite (26:34). Significantly, his marriages are a 'source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah' (26:35).

[14]For example, Esau sell his birthright to Jacob for a simple meal (25:29-34). Reuben sleeps with his father's concubine (35:22). Simeon and Levi slaughter the male inhabitants of Shechem (34:1-31).

[15]*Cf.* W.M.W. Roth, 'The Wooing of Rebekah', *CBQ* 34 (1972) 178-79.

[16]Interestingly, Tamar is not designated a Canaanite in ch. 38. The omission of this detail may be deliberate on the part of the author in order to indicate that Tamar is not a typical Canaanite.

(b) The 'seed' of Abraham will be very numerous. Various images symbolise the extent of the 'seed': the dust of the earth (13:16; 28:14), the stars of the heavens (15:5; 22:17; 26:4) and the sand of the seashore (22:17; 32:12).

(c) Through the 'seed' of Abraham all nations on earth will be blessed (22:18; 26:4; 28:14). Significantly, the patriarchal narratives usually associate the mediation of God's blessing with the son who receives the first-born blessing. Thus, while Ishmael was Abraham's first-born, God indicates that the divine promises will be fulfilled through Isaac (17:19-21; 21:12).[17] Similarly, although Esau is older that Jacob, it is the latter who receives the blessing of the first-born and mediates it to others. Of the twelve sons of Jacob, Joseph is initially singled out as the one through whom others will be blessed. Although the text does not state explicitly that Joseph received the blessing of the first-born from his father, it is clear (a) that he was the most favoured of all Jacob's sons, and (b) that the blessing of the first-born was formally given by Jacob to Joseph's youngest son Ephraim (48:1-22; *cf.* 1 Ch. 5:1-2).[18] In the light of this link between first-born and blessing, the writer of Genesis conveys the idea that God's blessing will come to the nations of the earth through a single descendant of Abraham. On this we shall have more to say below.

Eighth, there are strong indications that the main line of descent in Genesis is viewed as anticipating a royal lineage. This possibility is highlighted by the divine promise made to Abraham that 'kings will come from you' (17:6). A similar statement concerning Sarah echoes this: 'kings of peoples will come from her' (17:16). Later God promises Jacob that 'kings will come from your body' (35:11). Moreover, although the patriarchs are never directly designated kings, they are sometimes portrayed as enjoying royal status. We see this, for example, in Abraham's victory over the eastern kings (14:1-24); in the desire of Abimelech, king of Gerar, to make a covenant with first Abraham (21:22-34) and then Isaac (26:26-31); in the title 'mighty prince' (literally, 'a prince of God') given to Abraham by the Hittite inhabitants of Hebron (23:6).[19] Furthermore, the subject of kingship is prominent in the Joseph story. At the outset Joseph's brothers interpret his first dream as implying that he will be a king (37:8): 'Do you intend

[17]The divine comment in 21:12, 'it is through Isaac that your seed will be reckoned,' is especially noteworthy given that in the next verse God promises to make Ishmael into a nation because he is Abraham's seed.

[18]Significantly, however, Jacob later indicates that God's blessing will in the future be mediated through a descendant of the tribe of Judah (49:8-12).

to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?' His second dream reinforces this idea (37:9-11). Later, we witness the fulfilment of these dreams when Joseph rises from the obscurity of an Egyptian prison to hold the office of governor of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh (41:39-43). Further evidence that the central lineage in Genesis anticipates a royal dynasty will be considered below.

In the light of these factors it is apparent that the entire book of Genesis is structured around a unique line of 'seed' which will eventually become a royal dynasty. Significantly, through this royal line God's blessing will be mediated to others. The importance of this lineage is highlighted throughout Genesis, with practically every episode contributing in one way or another to it. With this in view we shall now examine 3:15 and 49:8-12, the two passages which in the past have most frequently been interpreted as messianic.

IV. Genesis 3:15—a Messianic Text?

Initially it should be noted that there is a very long tradition supporting a messianic reading of 3:15. The first indication of such an interpretation comes in the Septuagint translation of this verse, dating from the third century BC.[20] A similar understanding appears in the earliest Aramaic translations of Genesis as revealed in the Jewish targums Pseudo-Jonathan and Neofiti as well as the Fragmentary Targum, and possibly also Onkelos. These works interpret this verse as referring to a victory over Satan in the days of King Messiah.[21] Various New Testament allusions to Genesis 3:15 also probably reflect a messianic interpretation of this verse (*i.e.*, Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 15:22-28;

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[19]The brief comment in 36:31, 'These were the kings who reigned in Edom before any Israelite king reigned', indicates that whoever wrote this either anticipated or already knew of a royal dynasty within Israel.

[20]R.A. Martin, 'The Earliest Messianic Interpretation of Gen. 3:15', *JBL* 84 (1965) 425-27; W.C. Kaiser, *Towards an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978) 36-37.

[21]Targum Neofiti on 3:14b-15 reads as follows: 'And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your sons and her sons. And it will come about that when her sons observe the Law and do the commandments they will aim at you and strike you on your head and kill you. But when they forsake the commandments of the Law you will aim and bite him on his heel and make him ill. For her sons, however, there will be a remedy, but for you, O Serpent, there will not be a remedy, since they are to make appeasement in the end, in the day (*sic.*) of King Messiah' (M. McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis*, The Aramaic Bible 1A [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1992] 61).

Heb. 2:14; Rev. 12:1-13:1).[22] A similar trend is found in the writings of some of the early church fathers, the earliest known examples appearing in the works of Justin (*c.* AD 160) and Irenaeus[23] (*c.* AD 180). Here 3:15 is considered to be the first announcement of the Gospel, a view which led to it being designated the *Protevangelium*.[24] According to Westermann,

> Christian tradition has understood the passage as a prophecy about Christ (and Mary). The 'seed of the woman' was referred to one individual descendant who crushed the head of the serpent, whose seed was also an individual in the person of the devil (Satan), who is locked in deadly struggle with 'the seed of the woman,' and who eventually succumbs to it.[25]

This tradition continued throughout the medieval period, gaining widespread recognition. Even after the Reformation it was supported by both Catholic and Reformed theologians.[26] Only towards the end of the nineteenth century did serious doubts start to arise concerning it. While it continues to be defended by a small minority of twentieth century writers,[27] biblical scholars have by and large abandoned the idea that 3:15 refers to the Messiah's defeat of Satan.[28] Such a stance is even adopted by some conservative scholars. Thus, for example, E.J.

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[22]Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (Waco: Word, 1987) 81, suggests that the expression 'Son of Man' as a title for Jesus may allude to this passage. The same may be true regarding Jesus' use of the term 'woman' for Mary in Jn. 2:4 and 19:26. The expression 'born of a woman' in Gal. 4:4 may be yet another allusion to Gn. 3:15.

[23]Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, V.21 (Library of Christian Classics; (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953) 390-91.

[24]The term 'Protevangelium' has also been used since the sixteenth century to denote an apocryphal infancy gospel of the late second century AD which claims to have been written by James the Lord's brother; this work is otherwise known as the Book of James.

[25]Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 260.

[26]According to Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 260, 'The last weighty exegesis of Gen. 3:15 as Protoevangelium is that of F. Delitzsch, *Messianische Weissagungen* 1890, 23-28.'

[27]*E.g.*, D. Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: Tyndale, 1967) 70-71; G.C. Aalders, *Genesis*, Vol. 1; (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981) 107-108.

[28]This is particularly apparent in the commentaries on Genesis by H. Gunkel, *Genesis* (9th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977 [1910]) 21; J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (2nd ed; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930) 80-81; E.A. Speiser, *Genesis* (New York: Doubleday, 1969) 24; G. von Rad, *Genesis* (London: SCM, 1972) 93; B. Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977) 83-84; C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11* (London: SPCK, 1984) 260-61.

Young emphatically rejects the view that 3:15 refers to the Messiah:

> We know, however, as a result of scientific study that this is not the sense of the passage. Actually there is no Messianic prophecy here, and so, of course, there is no reference at all to Satan.[29]

Nevertheless, in spite of widespread unanimity against a messianic reading of 3:15, the recent commentaries on Genesis by Wenham and Hamilton acknowledge the possibility that this verse may be understood as messianic in the light of later revelation; for both writers it is an example of *sensus plenior*.[30] Clearly, the messianic spirit has still not been fully exorcised from this passage.

According to Westermann, two factors exclude a messianic interpretation of 3:15.[31] First, the term זֶרַע ('seed') must be understood collectively; in 3:15 it cannot refer to an individual such as the Messiah. Rather the passage is speaking about all the descendants of both the woman and the serpent. Second, 3:15 is part of a pronouncement of punishment (or of a curse). On form-critical ground, such pronouncements cannot contain a promise or prophecy, even as a secondary element. Taking these factors into consideration, modern scholars generally agree that the text is an aetiology explaining why human beings and snakes continually try to kill each other. As Mowinckel remarks,

> It is now generally admitted by those who adopt the historical approach to theology that there is no allusion here to the Devil or to Christ as 'born of woman', but that it is a quite general statement about mankind, and serpents, and the struggle between them which continues as long as the earth exits. The poisonous serpent strikes at man's foot whenever he is unfortunate enough to come too near to it; and always and everywhere man tries to crush the serpent's head when he has the chance.[32]

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[29]*Genesis 3* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1966) 105. Interestingly, however, he goes on to comment: 'Possibly, however, the writer...had some kind of an inkling that the passage did after all have something to do with man's redemption. Of course, the writer did not see Christ here and he did not see Satan, but he may have sensed that there was more here than meets the eye.'

[30]V. Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 200, n. 20, acknowledges his dependence upon W.S. LaSor, 'Prophecy, Inspiration, and *Sensus Plenior*', *TynB* 29 (1978) 49-60, esp. 56-57. Wenham, on the basis of his bibliography, also appears to follow LaSor.

[31]*Genesis 1-11*, 260.

[32]Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 11; *cf.* Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 259-60.

Although such an interpretation is evidently attractive and widely accepted, Wenham highlights the weakness of it by noting that the serpent is not merely a snake but rather an 'anti-God symbol'. As such the serpent symbolises the powers of evil. Consequently, he concludes that the curse upon the serpent 'envisages a long struggle between good and evil, with mankind eventually triumphing.'[33] In the light of this it may be argued, as Hamilton does (*contra* Westermann), that the divine speech to the serpent 'contains both judgement and promise'.[34] In spite of form-critical objections to the contrary, it is not surprising that both these elements should appear in 3:14-15. The divine speech to the serpent records God's pronouncement of judgement upon the serpent for having enticed the woman to disobey him. If the 'seed of the woman' does not have the ultimate victory over the serpent, as some writers think,[35] then the divine curse upon the serpent is also a punishment inflicted by God upon humanity. Consequently, the man and the woman are punished twice over. Yet, given the serpent's role as the instigator of the rebellion against God, it is surely unlikely that it received a lesser punishment than that imposed upon the human couple. Although the man and the woman are held responsible for disobeying God, and punished accordingly (3:16-19), it is surely fitting that the 'seed of the woman' should be instrumental in punishing the one who tempted the woman to sin.[36]

If we accept that 3:15 anticipates a future victory by the 'seed of the woman' over the powers of evil, three factors suggest that the conflict between them will last a long time:[37] (a) the term אֵיבָה 'enmity' in 3:15 denotes a lengthy hostility (*cf.* Nu. 35:21-22; Ezk. 25:15; 35:5); (b) the reference to the 'seed' of both the serpent and the woman suggests that the conflict will continue for generations; (c) the verb שׁוף 'strike at'[38] is used in the imperfect form with an iterative sense indicating

[33]*Genesis 1-15*, 80.

[34]*Genesis 1-17*, 200.

[35]*E.g.*, Skinner, *Genesis*, 81.

[36]It should not be overlooked that the earliest Greek and Aramaic translations of 3:15 interpret this verse as predicting the ultimate defeat of the serpent.

[37]The length of this hostility is emphasised by both Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 259, and Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 79-80.

[38]For the arguments in favour of this translation see Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, 197-98. Wenham, *Genesis 1-11*, 79-80, prefers 'batter'. Whatever the precise meaning of the term שׁוף it must have the same sense in both clauses (*contra* O. Procksch *Die Genesis übersetzt und erklärt*, [2nd ed; Leipzig: Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1924] 35; U.Cassuto, *Commentary on Genesis*, Vol. 1 [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1964] 161; Kidner, *Genesis*, 70, n. 3).

repeated actions. Thus, the forces of evil, as symbolized by the serpent, will only be defeated after a lengthy conflict between the 'seed of the woman' and the 'seed of the serpent'.

Viewed in the light of Genesis as a whole these observations concerning 3:15 take on an added significance. As we have noted above, the writer of Genesis highlights two types of seed, righteous and unrighteous, which are in conflict with each other. If the serpent symbolizes the powers of evil, then the 'seed of the serpent' must denote not merely snakes but rather all who are evil.[39] The corollary of this would be that the 'seed of the woman' designates here those who are righteous. Thus, 3:15 refers to a conflict between good and evil which will eventually result in victory for the righteous 'seed of the woman'. Such an interpretation of 3:15 is in keeping with what we have observed in the rest of Genesis. After the murder of Abel by Cain, Eve comments regarding the birth of Seth: 'God has granted me another seed in place of Abel, since Cain killed him' (4:25). Subsequently, the 'seed of the woman' is traced by a linear genealogy from Seth to Noah and then later from Noah to Abraham. As we have observed above, this special line of seed anticipates the coming of a royal dynasty which will defeat its enemies and bring God's blessing to all the nations of the earth (22:17-18). Whereas the writer of Genesis portrays the serpent and his unrighteous seed as bringing God's curse upon humanity, this righteous line of seed is presented as mediating God's blessing to those who favour and support it.[40] Thus, 3:15 anticipates the creation of a royal line through which the terrible consequences of the disobedience of the man and the woman in the Garden of Eden will be reversed.

One further observation supports a messianic interpretation of 3:15. Wifall suggests that behind this verse one can discern a Davidic or royal background. In particular he finds in 'royal' psalms various expressions which bear a close resemblance to 3:15. He writes,

> David is addressed as God's 'anointed' or 'messiah' (Ps 89:21,39; 2 Sam 22:51) whose 'seed' will endure forever under God's favor (Ps 89:5, 30, 37). As Yahweh has crushed the ancient serpent 'Rahab' (Ps 89:11), so now David and his sons will crush their enemies in the dust

[39]In this regard it is interesting to note the discussion in 1 Jn. 3:1-15 regarding the contrast between the children of God and those of the devil. Significantly, Cain is highlighted as being 'of the evil one' (v. 12).

[40]This is reflected, for example, in God's comment to Abraham: 'I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse' (12:3).

> beneath their feet (Ps 89:24; 2 Sam 22:37-43)... In Ps 72:9, the foes of the Davidic king are described as 'bowing down before him' and 'licking the dust.' In the familiar 'messianic' Psalms, God is described as having placed 'all things under his feet' (Ps 8:6) and will make 'your enemies your footstool' (Ps 110:1).[41]

While it cannot be demonstrated conclusively that the royal psalms quoted by Wifall are dependent upon 3:15, they clearly reflect a tradition which is in harmony with that observed above.

From the preceding discussion it is evident that the answer to the question, Is Genesis 3:15 messianic? depends largely upon methodological considerations. Viewed solely within the context of ch. 3, it is virtually impossible to sustain a messianic interpretation of 3:15. Considered, however, in the light of Genesis as a whole, a messianic reading of this verse is not only possible but highly probable. While most contemporary scholars rely heavily upon the methodologies of source and form criticism in studying Genesis, these approaches must not be allowed to dominate our interpretation of the text. By atomising the received text into short sections and interpreting these as self-contained units, we may fail to appreciate adequately the impact of the larger literary context upon our understanding of these smaller units. Moreover, all too often there is an unwillingness to recognise that every section of Genesis is now, regardless of its prior oral and/or literary history, an integral part of a much larger work. While many modern writers have been particularly dismissive of the traditional messianic understanding of 3:15, it is they, and not their predecessors, who have failed to grasp the true significance of this passage within its wider context.

V. Genesis 49:8-12 and the Lion of Judah

Before looking in detail at the content of 49:8-12 some general observations should be made about the immediate context of these verses.[42] First, ch. 49 records twelve 'blessing' given by Jacob to his sons. Each son is addressed separately and receives 'the blessing appropriate to him' (49:28); only in the case of Simeon and Levi are two brothers treated together (49:5-7). Second, the statements made by

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[41]W. Wifall, 'Gen 3:15—A Protevangelium?' *CBQ* 36 (1974) 363.

[42]For a fuller discussion of the issues concerning the form and date of ch. 49 with which the present writer is in general agreement, see Wenham, *Genesis 16-50* (Dallas: Word, 1994) 468-471.

Jacob relate to the future: 'Gather round so that I can tell you what will happen to you in days to come' (49:1). Third, the present chapter is an integral part of the book of Genesis.[43] In this regard it is especially important to observe how earlier episodes in Genesis are reflected in the blessings made in ch. 49. This is most apparent in the comments concerning Reuben, Simeon and Levi. Reuben is denied the privilege of being the first-born, because he defiled his father's bed by lying with his concubine (35:22). Likewise, Simeon and Levi receive an inferior blessing due to their vengeful actions against the inhabitants of Shechem (34:1-31). Fourth, what Jacob announces regarding the future of his sons reflects the esteem in which he hold them. Significantly, it is Judah and Joseph who receive the longest blessings, with five verses being devoted to each. When compared with the other blessings, the length and content of these blessings indicates that both Judah and Joseph were highly respected by their father. While one anticipates this as regards Joseph, given Jacob's attitude towards him elsewhere in the narrative (*e.g.*, 37:3-4, 34-35; 48:1-22), the special blessing given to Judah is somewhat unexpected.

As regards the contents of Jacob's blessing of Judah the most striking aspect is the expectation that Judah and his descendants will have authority over his brothers and their descendants. This is evident both in the remark, 'Your father's sons will bow down to you' (49:8) and in the reference to the sceptre and ruler's staff not departing from Judah (49:10).[44] Furthermore, as we shall observe in detail below, Jacob anticipates that there will arise out of the line of Judah a king to whom the nations will submit in obedience (49:10) and whose reign will be marked by prosperity and abundance (49:11).

This emphasis upon leadership is somewhat surprising in Jacob's blessing of Judah. Whereas Joseph enjoys the spotlight in chs. 37-50, Judah plays a relatively minor role. In the light of (a) Joseph's dreams regarding the obeisance of his family to him (37:5-11), (b) his eventual high standing in Egypt (41:41-46) and (c) the conferring of the right of the first-born upon Joseph's youngest son Ephraim (48:1-20), it might have been anticipated that any future monarchy would be

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[43] *cf.* Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 459-62. Links between ch. 49 and earlier passages in Genesis are also noted by E.M. Good, 'The "Blessing" on Judah, Gen 49:8-12', *JBL* 82 (1963) 427-32 and C.M. Carmichael, 'Some Sayings in Gen 49', *JBL* 88 (1969) 435-44. Their suggestion, however, that the blessings in ch. 49 were deliberately composed in order to comment on these earlier passages is highly questionable.

[44] Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 477, interprets the expression, 'from between his feet' as referring to Judah's descendants.

linked to his descendants. This, however, is not the case. Rather, the line of Judah is the one destined for leadership. Without wishing to dismiss completely the element of surprise in Jacob's blessing of Judah, it is noteworthy that of the sons of Jacob, excluding Joseph, Judah receives the most attention in chs. 38-50. Indeed, he is sometimes presented as the brothers' leader and spokesman (*cf.* 43:8-9; 44:16-34; 46:28). The importance of Judah is also evident from the inclusion of the account of his relationship with Tamar in ch. 38. This focuses on Judah's reluctance, following the deaths of his sons Er and Onan, to allow Er's wife Tamar to marry his third son Shelah in order to produce 'seed' and so maintain the family line. When Tamar eventually becomes pregnant by deceiving Judah, he is forced to acknowledge the righteousness of her actions (38:26). The account eventually concludes by recording the birth of Perez from whom the royal line of David is descended.[45] Two elements within the narrative of ch. 38 are possibly intended to alert the reader to the future importance of Judah's descendants. First, the writer emphasises the subject of 'seed' in 38:9:

> But Onan knew that the offspring (seed) would not be his; so when he went in to his brother's wife he spilled the semen (seed) on the ground, lest he should give offspring (seed) to his brother (RSV).

In the light of these comments it is clear that the writer is interested in the continuation of Judah's line of 'seed'. Second, when Tamar eventually gives birth to twin boys, the writer observes that although Zerah's hand emerged first, his brother Perez was born before him (38:27-30).[46] Taken together these factors suggest that the reader should anticipate special developments regarding the line of Judah. Thus, while most of the narrative in chs. 37-50 centres on Joseph, attention is drawn early on to Judah and his descendants.[47]

Our discussion of 49:8-12 has focused thus far on the general observation that Jacob associates the descendants of Judah with leadership. Of itself this does not require that the passage be understood as messianic; indeed, Westermann comments that 'it is not a

[45]There are interesting parallels between ch. 38 and the book of Ruth which concludes by giving the genealogy of king David beginning with Perez the son of Tamar (Ru. 4:18-22). Although Tamar and Ruth are non-Israelites, they both play an active role in continuing the royal line. It is also interesting to observe that David names one of his daughters Tamar (2 Sa. 13:1).

[46]Given the special interest in Genesis in the line of 'seed', the spilling of Onan's 'seed' on the ground take on an added significance.

messianic prophecy in the sense that it promises a king of salvation at the end-time.'[48] Yet, although Westermann rejects a messianic reading of this passage, he readily acknowledges that some of these verses refer to the coming of a future king. He maintains, however, that the events anticipated here correspond 'exactly to the historical reality under David and Solomon,'[49] and cannot, therefore, be messianic.

Westermann's understanding of 49:8-12 rests on the following observations. First, vv. 8 and 9 originated as tribal sayings which praised Judah for its success in war during the period of the judges. Second, vv. 10-12 are a promise of blessing for Judah, anticipating the coming of a future king from within the tribe. Consequently, Westermann concludes that vv. 8-12 refer to Judah's dominance as a tribe during the pre-monarchic period and the subsequent rise of the Davidic dynasty. It is also possible, however, that vv. 10-12 anticipate a situation which did not come to fulfilment in the time of David and Solomon. Whereas Westermann intentionally limits the mention of 'nations' in v. 10b to those subjugated by David and Solomon, this need not be the case; it may be understood as a reference to all the nations of the earth.[50] Similarly, the fertility of the land pictured in vv. 11-12 may not necessarily describe the period of the early monarchy. As Wenham notes, 'the golden age of future blessing (the messianic age) is associated with bumper harvest, including grapes (*cf.* Lv. 26:5; Ps. 72:16; Is. 25:6; Joel 2:24; Am. 9:13).'[51] While it would be unwise to deny completely a link between 49:10-12 and the period of the united monarchy under David and Solomon, we should not exclude the possibility that these verses were understood as looking beyond that

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[47]Although ch. 38 is generally viewed as an independent unit unrelated to the Joseph story, R. Alter, 'A Literary Approach to the Bible', *Commentary* 60 (1975) 74, highlights a number of important parallels between chs. 37 and 38. He comments: 'There is thematic justification for the connection since the tale of Judah and his offspring, like the whole Joseph story, and indeed like the entire book of Genesis, is about the reversal of the iron law of primogeniture, about the election through some devious twist of destiny of a younger son to carry on the line. There is, one might add, genealogical irony in the insertion of this material at this point of the story, for while Joseph, next to the youngest of the sons, will eventually rule over his brothers in his own lifetime as splendidly as he has dreamed, it is Judah, the fourth-born, who will be the progenitor of the kings of Israel, as the end of Chapter 38 will remind us.'

[48]Westermann, *Genesis 37-50*, 232.

[49]Westermann, *Genesis 37-50*, 230.

[50]*Cf.* H. Gunkel, *Genesis*, 482. The idea of the Davidic king ruling the nations is often celebrated in the psalms (*e.g.*, Ps. 72:8-11) and the prophets (*e.g.*, Is. 2:2-4).

[51]*Genesis 16-50*, 479.

time to a more glorious age.[52]

Whether we interpret 49:8-12 as anticipating the time of the united monarchy or some future 'messianic' period, it is clear that this passage forms an integral part of the overall picture being presented by the writer of Genesis. The king who will arise in the future from the tribe of Judah is clearly linked to the line of 'seed' that is traced throughout the book of Genesis. Through this king God's blessing will be mediated to those nations who accept his authority over them. As a result they will experience a new age of prosperity with the reversal of the divine curse which caused the earth to become less fertile as a consequence of human sin. Furthermore, 49:9-10 emphasizes that through the line of Judah victory will be achieved over all enemies. In this there are echoes of (a) the promise in 3:15 that the 'seed of the woman' shall overcome the powers of evil, and (b) the divine oath to Abraham in 22:17: 'Your seed will take possession of the cities of his enemies.'

Before concluding our discussion of 49:8-12, some brief comments are required regarding the portrayal of Joseph in the Genesis narrative. As we have already noted, Jacob's pronouncement that the future kingship in Israel will be linked to the tribe of Judah is surprising given the special status of Joseph in Egypt and his earlier dreams regarding the obeisance of his parents and brothers. Moreover, as van Groningen observes,[53] there are aspects of the Joseph story that have a messianic flavour. Within the context of Genesis as a whole, it is surely significant that Joseph rises from obscurity to become governor of the great nation of Egypt, and as a consequence ensures the survival not only of his own relatives but of all those who came to Egypt for food during the famine (41:57; *cf.* 50:20). It is surely no coincidence that Joseph is portrayed as one divinely chosen to mediate God's blessing to all the nations of the earth. Yet, in spite of his actions Joseph is not presented as fulfilling in their entirety the promises made to the patriarchs. Rather, he foreshadows the role of the future king.

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[52]According to E. Jenni, 'Messiah, Jewish', IDB 3:362, the promise in 49:10-12 'clearly goes beyond the condition attained under David and must refer to a new messianic ruler in a new ear of paradisaical fruitfulness.' This is clearly how these verses were interpreted by the earliest Jewish and Christian exegetes. The Targums unanimously bear witness to this fact (see the extensive notes by M. Aberbach and B. Grossfeld, *Targum Onkelos to Genesis*, [New York: Ktav, 1982] 286-91), as does the brief comment in Rev. 5:5 regarding the triumph of the 'Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David'.

[53]Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament*, 150-53, 166-67.

The existence of close parallels between Joseph and the future king anticipated by the writer of Genesis is a natural consequence of their both belonging to the same 'seed'. As we have noted above, there is running through Genesis the idea that progeny will resemble its progenitor. If a future king is to arise from the main line of 'seed' in Genesis, then it is to be expected that he will resemble his predecessors. However, it is apparent that for the writer of Genesis the achievements of this future king will far surpass those of his ancestors.

VI. Conclusion

In the light of the preceding discussion a number of concluding observations may be made. First, given that the book of Genesis, as it has come down to us, is a continuous narrative, it is important to appreciate the overall picture which it portrays. Significantly, this picture is only constructed gradually. Ideas which are introduced early on in the book may be developed and modified by later comments. For this reason it is important to understand how each component contributes to and is itself coloured by the whole picture. Consequently, it is methodologically unsound to argue that individual passages are not messianic on the basis of source and/or form critical considerations.[54] Clearly, what needs to be assessed is the picture created by the combination of all the different elements which constitute the book of Genesis as it now stands. This has been the approach adopted above, and in the light of it there is good reason to believe that the writer of Genesis structured his account around the expectation of a victorious, future king through whom the nations of the earth would be divinely blessed.

Second, although Genesis narrates events which took place centuries before there was any monarchy in ancient Israel, as the book now stands it anticipates in a variety of ways the founding of a royal dynasty originating from the tribe of Judah. While the establishment of the Davidic monarchy was viewed as an important stage in bringing to fruition the expectations introduced in Genesis,[55] their ultimate fulfilment was looked for well beyond the period of the united

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[54]This criticism is especially applicable in the case of Westermann. While he offers serious, but not necessarily always convincing, arguments for the non-messianic nature of 3:15 and 49:8-12, he does not address adequately the interpretation of these passages as part of a unified literary work. Yet, it is from this latter perspective that these verses are most clearly messianic.

monarchy. In this regard it is important to consider the book of Genesis as the first section of a larger literary work which concludes with 2 Kings. Significantly, the various books which compose this longer work are linked by a common plot, a major aspect of which is the fulfilment (or, in the case of the promised king, partial fulfilment) of the various divine promises found in Genesis. In view of this it is important to consider how later developments in this plot shed light upon the promises introduced in Genesis. When the promise of a royal 'seed' of Abraham through whom the nations of the earth will be blessed is reaffirmed with David (2 Sa. 7:12-16; *cf.* Ps. 89:1-52), there are clear indications that the fulfilment still lies in the future. It seems apparent, therefore, that when Genesis to 2 Kings was first conceived as a continuous account the promise of a future king found in Genesis was not thought of as finding its ultimate fulfilment in the time of David/Solomon.

Third, according to Jenni, there are various features of messianic ideology in the Old Testament 'which cannot be traced back to the kingly ideal', but which may be associated with 'the mystical figure of original man or the king of paradise'.[56] Why this 'original man' came to be linked to the Messiah is something of a mystery. However, by discovering in Genesis a strong messianic ideology underlying the entire book, we are now in a much better position to explain the relationship between messianic passages associated with the kingly ideal and original man.[57]

Fourth, taking Genesis as a unified literary work our study supports a messianic interpretation of 3:15 and 49:8-12, a view which was very widely accepted until the introduction of form criticism as a major interpretative method. In saying this we do not exclude, in theory at least, the possibility that these passages may have been

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[55]Obvious parallels exist between the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants (*cf.* R.E. Clements, *Abraham and David: Genesis XV and its Meaning for Israelite Tradition,* [London: SCM, 1967]). Given that David is the youngest of Jesse's sons, it is interesting to note that in Genesis the privilege of primogeniture is frequently overturned in favour of a younger son. Further links between Genesis and the biblical material concerning king David are noted by B. Mazar, 'The Historical Background of the Book of Genesis', *JNES* 28 (1969) 73-83, and G.A. Rendsburg, *The Redaction of Genesis* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1986) 107-20. In the light of the emphasis which Genesis gives to similarities between those of the same 'seed', it is no surprise that there are close links between the main family line in Genesis and the Davidic monarchy.

[56]Jenni, 'Messiah, Jewish', IDB, 3:361.

[57]*Cf.* J.A. Motyer, 'Messiah', IBD, 2:988.

understood differently in an earlier context. Unfortunately, however, without adequate external evidence it is highly improbable that we can now reconstruct with any degree of certainty the oral/literary history of these verses prior to their incorporation within the text of Genesis as it now stands. It is, therefore, important that we do not allow the tentative conclusions of form critical studies to influence unduly our interpretation of Genesis.

Fifth, although the later part of our study has focused on 3:15 and 49:8-12, messianic ideology permeates the book of Genesis from beginning to end. As we have sought to demonstrate above it is intimately linked to the unique line of 'seed' which forms the main family lineage in Genesis. The importance of this line of 'seed' must not be disregarded. When its nature and significance is fully appreciated we are in a better position to understand the basis of Paul's argument in Galatians 3:16. that the 'seed' of Abraham is Christ.[58]

[58]A similar reading of Genesis underlies Peter's remarks in Acts 3:25-26.

CHAPTER 3

DAVID IN THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL: A MESSIANIC HOPE?[1]

Philip E. Satterthwaite

Summary

This study focuses on two sets of texts in the books of Samuel: the poetic texts at either end of the books of Samuel (Hannah's Song, 1 Sa. 2:1-10; David's Thanksgiving, 2 Sa. 22; David's Last Words, 2 Sa. 23:1-7); and 2 Samuel 7, in which God promises that David's line and kingdom shall endure 'in perpetuity' (2 Sa. 7:16). It is argued that, while these texts present an ideal picture of God's king (anointed one), the narrative of the later years of David's kingship in 2 Samuel suggests that David himself fell short of this ideal. While the books of Samuel do not express a fully-developed messianic expectation (in that they do not explicitly look forward to a future ruler from the line of David who will restore the fortunes of the line), they nonetheless trace a divergence between ideal and reality even in David's time which tends in the direction of such an expectation.

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[1]This essay is a revised version of a paper read to the Old Testament Study Group of the Tyndale Fellowship on 6th July 1994 at Swanwick, Derbyshire.

I. Introduction

The figure of David, God's chosen king, is of great significance for the topic of messianic expectation in the Old Testament and in subsequent writings. Several Old Testament texts which express a hope for the future do so by speaking of a restoration of fortunes of the Davidic line;[2] so too the intertestamental literature.[3] In the New Testament it could be argued that the portrayal of David in the books of Samuel, along with a number of the Psalms, supply many of the categories by which the New Testament writers seek to understand Jesus.[4]

But how is David presented in the books of Samuel? Can one speak of a messianic hope in these books? If so, on what terms? Passages such as the poetic texts at either end of the books of Samuel, Hannah's Song (1 Sa. 2:1-10), David's Thanksgiving (2 Sa. 22:1-51) and David's Last Words (2 Sa. 23:1-7) are clearly important in framing an answer to these questions; so too 2 Samuel 7, in which the famous promise is made to David's dynasty of a house and a kingdom which shall 'endure in perpetuity' (v. 16). 2 Samuel 7, however, forms only one part of a much larger narrative describing David's rise to power and his kingship over Israel and Judah. And in the case of the poetic texts the question of their relationship to the narrative they enclose needs to be explored.

This essay begins by noting how the poetic texts take up themes which also run through the narratives of David's rise and kingship. I follow this by investigating the presentation of David in the main narratives of 1 and 2 Samuel in more detail, focusing particularly on 2 Samuel 6 and 7. The next section investigates the relationship of 2 Samuel 8-20 and the Samuel Appendix to what has preceded. The essay concludes with an assessment of the total impact of 1 and 2 Samuel on the reader. This essay is in effect a 'final form' reading of the books of Samuel with particular reference to the question of messianic expectation.[5] It is also much indebted to recent work on narrative techniques in the Old Testament and in the books of Samuel in particular.[6]

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[2]*E.g.*, Am. 9:11-15; Is. 11:1-2; Je. 23:5-6.
[3]*E.g.*, *Psalms of Solomon* 17.
[4]For instance, the NT representations of Jesus as establishing God's kingdom (Mt. 4:17), as vindicated by God (Rom. 1:4) and as victorious over the principalities and powers (Col. 2:15) seem to me to take up ideas found in the books of Samuel (though not only there).

II. The Messiah in the Poetic Texts (1 Sa. 2:1-10; 2 Sa. 22:1-51; 2 Sa. 23:1-7)

The three poetic texts, Hannah's Song, David's Thanksgiving, and David's Last Words, seem, as Childs has noted, to have been placed at either end of 1 and 2 Samuel as a hermeneutical bracket, presenting an interpretation of the main narratives and, in particular, of the figure who features so prominently in them, King David, the anointed of YHWH.[7] This suggestion is reinforced by the observation that there are clear verbal and thematic links between all three texts.[8] They clearly have different perspectives corresponding to their position in 1 and 2 Samuel: Hannah's Song looks forward, describing God's power to bring about surprising reversals, and is programmatic for much of what follows; David's Thanksgiving equally clearly looks back, reviewing many occasions on which God has been with David;[9] David's Last Words, as well as containing references to God's dealings with David (2 Sa. 23:1, 5), set out a picture of the just ruler which seems to be a model for David's descendants to follow (vv. 3-4),[10] and thus

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[5]The term 'final form' is now not so frequently used as it was, perhaps because those who produce such readings have felt less need to justify their approach in recent years. In using the term, I do not mean to suggest that earlier stages in the formation of the books of Samuel can confidently be identified. Questions have been raised concerning the possibility of accurately reconstructing the previous history of the books of Samuel. R. Polzin has, in my view, said succinctly and elegantly most of what needs to be said on this score: see *Samuel and the Deuteronomist. A Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History, Part Two: 1 Samuel* (2nd ed; Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993) 1-17.

[6]If I may attempt to anticipate one possible objection to my approach, that it does not follow the order of a reading (starting at either end of the book and only then reading through): I am trying to answer the question, What picture of David do these books leave one with when one has finished reading them through? Elements of the impressions one is trying to reconcile will include the narrative portrayal of David's decline as well as the positive picture found in the poetic texts at either end (which stand out and are linked in the reader's mind because of their similar themes and vocabulary).

[7]B.S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 271-75. J.W. Watts discusses in some detail the relationship of the 1 Sa. 2:1-10 and 2 Sa. 22 to their immediate and more extended contexts: see *Psalm and Story. Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative* (JSOTS 139; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 19-40 (ch. 2, 'Hannah's Song') and 99-117 (ch. 6, 'David's Thanksgiving'). He concludes that Hannah's Song is probably a secondary insertion, on the grounds that it makes no contribution to the developing plot of 1 Sa. 1-2, and also on text-critical grounds (32-37). Similarly, 2 Sa. 22 is part of the 'Samuel Appendix' (2 Sa. 21-24), which is distinct from the preceding narrative.

look both back and forward. However, though the three texts have different functions, they also reiterate and develop claims which are important for the question of messianic expectation in the books of Samuel. These may be summarised under four heads.

(1) *The king/anointed one as God's appointed ruler*: The last verse of Hannah's Song introduces the figure of God's king, further described as 'his anointed one' (1 Sa. 2:10), chosen by God as the leader of God's people, and specially endowed by God for that task: 'He gives strength to his king [לְמַלְכּוֹ], and lifts up the horn of his anointed [מְשִׁיחוֹ]' (1 Sa. 2:10). The last verse of David's Thanksgiving is more specific (2 Sa. 22:51): 'He gives his king [מַלְכּוֹ] great victories, and shows faithfulness to his anointed [לִמְשִׁיחוֹ], to David and to his descendants in perpetuity.' David is thus identified as God's king; further, God's commitment to him is said to extend to his descendants. David's Last Words, which identify David as 'the anointed one [מְשִׁיחַ] of the God of Jacob' (2 Sa. 23:1), express a similar thought, but with reference to a covenant made by God with David and, by implication, his descendants (v. 5): 'Is not my house right with God? Has he not made with me an everlasting covenant, arranged and secured in every part?'[11]

(2) *David trusts in God and is upheld and rescued by God*: 'YHWH is my rock, my fortress, and deliverer' (2 Sa. 22:2; *cf.* vv. 7, 17-20). David thus destroys his enemies with God's help (2 Sa. 22:38-43, 49). These enemies include people who might have appealed to God for help (v. 42), which would most naturally indicate David's enemies within

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[8]See Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 23-24 and 101-2 for links between Hannah's Song and David's Thanksgiving and between David's Thanksgiving and David's Last Words respectively. As he notes, the three poems not only have many words in common, but also frequently express the same idea in similar words. Thematic links between Hannah's Song and David's Thanksgiving include: God as rock (1 Sa. 2:2; 2 Sa. 22:32); God as causing men to fall (1 Sa. 2:7; 2 Sa. 22:28); God as saving the poor (1 Sa. 2:8; 2 Sa. 22:28); God as rewarding his faithful (1 Sa. 2:9; 2 Sa. 22:26); God as thundering (1 Sa. 2:10; 2 Sa. 22:14); God as upholding his king (1 Sa. 2:10; 2 Sa. 22:51). Links between David's Thanksgiving and David's Last Words include: God as exalting David (2 Sa. 22:34; 23:1); God as bringing salvation for David (2 Sa. 22:3, 4, 36, 42, 47; 23:5); God as committed to David and his descendants in perpetuity (2 Sa. 22:51; 23:5).

[9]Note particularly the introductory verse (2 Sa. 22:1): 'David sang to YHWH the words of this song when YHWH delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.'

[10]So Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 115.

[11]NIV; alternatively, כֵּן may be translated 'so': 'Is not my house *so* with God?' The meaning is the same in either case.

Israel. The reference of these verses is, however, general: David puts to flight *all* his enemies with God's help.

(3) *David leads the people of God in battle, and God gives him power over the surrounding nations*: 'You have preserved me as the head of nations. People I did not know are subject to me' (2 Sa. 22:44; *cf*. vv. 28, 45-46, 48).

(4) *The king is to rule God's people justly*: 'When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God, he is like the light of morning at sunrise...' (2 Sa. 23:3-4). In a brief, evocative image, the poem likens a just ruler to the freshness of an early morning, full of hope and the promise of life. Verse 5 applies this general description to David and his house.

In making these claims, these three texts emphasize themes which also run through the main narratives of 1 and 2 Samuel. This may be traced in detail.

(1) David's choice as king, his anointing, and the consequent displacement of Saul in his favour form the backbone of the narrative from 1 Samuel 16 to 2 Samuel 5. As the culmination to this rise he receives a promise that his son will be the first in a royal dynasty which will be established 'in perpetuity' (עַד עוֹלָם, 2 Sa. 7:16).

The stages of Saul's fall are traced as a negative index of this rise, ending in his prostration at Endor (1 Sa. 28) and finally his death at Gilboa (1 Sa. 31). Saul's adherents become increasingly weak after his death, until the last surviving adult descendant of Saul is maintained at King David's table (2 Sa. 9:13).

(2) The account of David's rise is also the account of God's upholding and protection of David. This emerges not only in those passages in 1 and 2 Samuel where David seeks and receives God's guidance, often *in extremis* (1 Sa. 22:5; 23:2, 10-12; 30:6-8; 2 Sa. 2:1; 5:19, 23-24). Other passages speak of God guiding or protecting David (1 Sa. 23:14; 25:32-34, 39; 26:12; 2 Sa. 7:1, 11; 8:6, 14), and this perhaps predisposes us to see God's hand at other points. In a similar way, Jonathan, Abigail, and, most strikingly, Saul himself, all acknowledge that David will become king, reinforcing our sense that nothing can stop the progress of God's chosen one (1 Sa. 20:14-15; 23:16-18; 24:19-22; 25:28-29; 26:10, 25).

As God upholds David, so he turns against Saul in judgement (1 Sa. 15:22-29).[12] Thus in 1 Samuel 16:13-4, the coming of 'the spirit of YHWH' upon David at his anointing is followed the turning of this same spirit from Saul, and his tormenting by an 'evil spirit from

YHWH' (1 Sa. 16:14; *cf.* 1 Sa. 16:23; 18:10; 19:9). The theme of God turning against Saul reaches its climax when Samuel, summoned back from the dead, pronounces his doom (28:15-19).[13]

(3) For David as leading the people of God in battle, 1 Samuel 17, in which David takes on and kills Goliath, seems to be a programmatic text: here is David, recently anointed as God's king, defeating the enemies of God's people ('"Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"', 1 Sa. 17:26; '"The whole world will know that there is a God in Israel"', v. 46). The accounts of David's rescue of Keilah from the Philistines (1 Sa. 23:1-6), his attacks on tribes to the south of Judah (1 Sa. 27:8-12), and his wars against surrounding nations in 2 Samuel 5, 8 and 10 only work this out on a larger scale. There is a sense in 2 Samuel 8 and 10 that Israel, as a result of David's victories, has finally become a nation, established in the land and interacting with other nations on that basis.[14]

(4) As for the theme of David as a just ruler, we may note the statement at the beginning of the list of David's officials in 2 Samuel 8:15-18 that 'David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all the people.' Also relevant here are the themes of David's reverence for Saul's person,[15] his innocence of the deaths of Saul's adherents,[16] and his kind treatment of Mephibosheth (2 Sa. 9). The various incidents in which David seeks to dissociate himself from the more unscrupulous suggestions and actions of Joab and Abishai also convey a similar message.[17]

To sum up, the claims made by Hannah's Song, David's Thanksgiving, and David's Last Words have not simply been superimposed on narratives which originally had different emphases. Rather, the texts seem to act as a focus for important themes in the main narratives. Watts' study of the first two of these texts comes to similar conclusions. According to him, both texts proclaim that

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[12]For many of these points, see D.M. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul: An Interpretation of a Biblical Story* (JSOTS 14; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), in whose view the narrative raises serious questions concerning God's motives in his dealings with Saul. V.P. Long, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) takes a more positive view of God's actions in 1 Sa. 9-15.

[13]He falls 'full length' on hearing Samuel's words (1 Sa. 28:20), a symbolic end to the kingship of one whose height had seemed so clearly to commend him as king (1 Sa. 10:23-24).

[14]See Section III below.

[15]1 Sa. 24:4-7; 26: 8-11; *cf.* 2 Sa. 1:14-16.

[16]See the discussion in Section III.

[17]2 Sa. 3:22-39; 16:9-12.

'YHWH is behind all events, both successes and failures; YHWH supports and rewards the faithful; YHWH supports the Davidic king.'[18] In so doing, '[both] psalms raise the subtle and implicit indicators of divine providence contained in the Samuel narratives to the level of overt assertion.'[19] That is, the poetic texts do not simply summarize, but emphasize, painting a clear picture of what God's king can achieve for Israel. The David of the narratives in Samuel has, in effect, been elevated in the poetic texts to an ideal. The future aspect of the Last Words of David (*cf.* also 2 Sa. 22:51) also seems to introduce an implicit note of hope, as much as to suggest: this is the kind of king Israel longs for. As this hope concerns an anointed figure, it is hard to deny that, in one sense of the words, these poetic texts express a messianic hope.[20]

However, there is more to the figure of David in 1 and 2 Samuel than the above brief treatment has been able to capture. In particular, the relationship between the three passages treated above and the narratives which they enclose is more complex than has emerged so far.

III. David's Rise

The books of Samuel begin with a barren woman who cries to God in her need and is heard (1 Sa. 1:9-11, 19-20).[21] The main focus of Hannah's Song (1 Sa. 2:1-10), accordingly, is God, portrayed as sovereign and as judge; as strengthening the feeble and bringing down the strong, killing and bringing to life, making rich and making poor. God's Messiah occupies a prominent place in the Song's structure (v. 10, the reference to 'the horn [קֶרֶן] of his anointed' balancing 'my horn

[18]*Psalm and Story*, 38.

[19]*Ibid.*, 106. Watts notes, in particular (pp. 105-6), that the references to God as 'rock' (צוּר), 'cliff' (סֶלַע), and 'stronghold' (מְצוּדָה) in 2 Sa. 22:2-3 remind one of David's hiding places when on the run from Saul (1 Sa. 22:4-5; 23:25, 28; 24:2, 23); further that David's Thanksgiving is also linked to 1 Sa. 23-26 by the theme of David's righteousness (1 Sa. 24:18; 26:23; 2 Sa. 22:21, 25); note in particular the verbal link between 1 Sa. 26:23 ('YHWH pays back a man according to his righteousness' [ויהוה יָשִׁיב לָאִישׁ אֶת־צִדְקָתוֹ]) and 2 Sa. 22:25 (YHWH paid me back according to my righteousness' [וַיָּשֶׁב יהוה לִי כְּצִדְקָתִי]).

[20]So R.A. Carlson, *David the Chosen King: A Traditio-historical Approach to the Second Book of Samuel* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964) 265.

[21]W. Brueggemann finds great significance in the fact that the account of the rise of the monarchy in Israel begins with this narrative of helplessness transformed by God's power: see '1 Samuel 1: A Sense of a Beginning', *ZAW* 102 (1990) 33-48.

[קַרְנִי]' in v. 1); but is not the Song's main subject. As has often been noted, the Song is programmatic for the narratives which follow, emphasizing God's action as one who brings about surprising reversals, and destroys his enemies.[22] The barren woman, Hannah, is enabled to bear a son. More unexpectedly, God's own people, and anointed leaders of God's people can find their positions dramatically reversed: Eli's sons are rejected as God's priests;[23] the Israelites are defeated and the ark which was supposed to secure victory is captured; Saul is rejected as king, and Israel under Saul are 'swept away' at Mount Gilboa (1 Sa. 31; *cf.* 12:25).[24]

The second half of 1 Samuel, as already noted, interleaves the accounts of David's rise and Saul's fall. Saul is by no means a stock figure of evil in these chapters. The narrator suggests the complexity of a character driven to pursue his rival, but on occasions reduced to weeping and remorse over his actions (1 Sa. 24:16-21; 26:21, 25); and the scene with the woman of Endor paints a disturbing picture of a man rejected by God and reduced to terror at his coming death (1 Sa. 28). Thus the theme of God's judgement (one aspect of the theme of reversal as set out in Hannah's Song) features prominently in the account of David's rise.[25]

The way is now open for David to become king. Chapters 2-5 of 2 Samuel trace the later stages of David's rise to power.[26] Two interlinked themes run through this account: David's growing

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[22]Childs, *Introduction*, 273; R.P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel* (Old Testament Guides; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1984), 26.

[23]There are verbal and thematic links between Hannah's Song and the account of the rejection of Eli's sons in 1 Sa. 2: compare 2:25 ('YHWH intended to kill them [לַהֲמִיתָם]) with 2:6 ('YHWH kills [מֵמִית] and brings to life'); and the theme of unexpected poverty in 2:36 with the similar theme in 2:5, 7. This seems somewhat to undermine Watts' view that the Song makes no contribution to the plot of the surrounding narrative: the Song is not *essential* to the plot, but the main theme of the Song is immediately exemplified in the inverse fates of Samuel and Eli's house.

[24]The possibility of a king of Israel being rejected has first been hinted at in 1 Sa. 8, where God regards the request for a king as a rejection of himself as king, but nonetheless grants the request (vv. 7-9). It has been usual to take this and other expressions of misgiving concerning the request for a king in 1 Sa. 8-12 (*e.g.*, 8:10-18; 10:17-19; 12:12-15) as belonging to an 'anti-monarchic' source, in contrast to other parts of these chapters which portray Saul in a more positive light (chs. 9 and 11); see, for example, the summary of previous scholarship in A.D.H. Mayes, 'The Rise of the Israelite Monarchy', *ZAW* 90 (1978) 1-19. More recently, Long, *Reign and Rejection*, has argued that these chapters form the first part of a coherent account explaining Saul's rejection as king. Whatever the literary history of these chapters, their present function in the book is as part of an account of the displacement of Saul, the people's choice as king, in favour of David, God's own choice.

acceptance by Judah and Israel; and David's treatment of Saul's adherents.[27]

David's anointing as king over Judah (2 Sa. 2:1-4) is followed by the account in ch. 2 of hostilities between the house of Saul, led by Ish-Bosheth (but more particularly by Abner, 2:8). This account culminates in the summary statement of 3:1 that 'The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time. David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.'[28] Abner, Saul's former army commander, initiates the next stage. Using his influence over 'the house of Saul' (3:6), he starts negotiations with David about bringing all Israel over to him (3:12), in the course of which David demands back and receives his wife Michal, earlier given to Paltiel.[29] Abner is murdered by Joab, and the narrator is at pains to stress David's innocence of this death.[30] This is not simply later glorification of David, for his innocence is immediately relevant to the account of his rise: will the remaining tribes of Israel, never mind later readers, accept the explanation offered? David publicly laments Abner's death, and 'all the people and all Israel took note and were pleased... all the people and all Israel knew that the king had no part in the murder of Abner son of Ner' (3:36-37).[31]

The death of Abner effectively ends the resistance of the house

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[25]The theme of reversal also runs through David's Lament (2 Sa. 1:19-27), whose refrain 'how are the mighty [גִּבּוֹרִים] fallen' (2 Sa. 1:19, 25, 27) picks up 1 Sa. 2:4, 'the bow of the mighty [גִּבּוֹרִים] is broken'. However, the Lament makes no mention of God's agency (in contrast to Hannah's Song), nor of God avenging David on Saul (a theme that has surfaced in 1 Sa. 24-26), dwelling instead on Saul's and Jonathan's previous victories (v. 22) and the loss their deaths represent to Israel (v. 24).

[26]Two elements in 2 Sa. 2-5 reinforce continuity with the 1 Samuel account: the references to David consulting God (2:1; 5:19, 23-24); and other people's certainty about David's rise being God's will (3:9, 17; 5:2).

[27]The latter theme has already been raised in his oaths to Jonathan and Saul to treat their descendants well (1 Sa. 20:14-17; 24:21-22).

[28]The list of David's sons born in Hebron (2 Sa.3:2-5) underlines this point.

[29]Michal is valuable to David not only as a link with Saul's house, but because of the possibility of offspring who will unite Saul's and David's houses.

[30]Almost every element in the account (2 Sa. 3:19-39) makes this point: David and Abner have concluded negotiations peaceably (v. 21) when Joab returns from a raid (v. 22; the fact that he brings 'much plunder' implies that he has been away some time and cannot have been in collusion with David); when Joab sends messengers after Abner, 'David did not know it' (v. 26); David curses Joab when he hears about Abner's murder (vv. 28-29); and Joab and Abishai are said to have carried it out because of a private grievance (v. 30); the sons of Zeruiah are too 'hard' (brutal) for David (v. 39).

of Saul (2 Sa. 4:1), and the murder of Ish-Bosheth does not really affect the question whether David will succeed or not. He again distances himself from the murderers, Baanah and Recab:[32] citing the example of the Amalekite in 2 Samuel 1 he has them put to death. His public dishonouring of their bodies contrasts with his treatment of Ish-Bosheth, whose head is buried with Abner in Hebron. This seems to send a reassuring message to the Israelite tribes, who now approach David and anoint him as king at Hebron (2 Sa. 5:1-3). David becomes king over all Israel. This is formally marked by a brief summary of the years David reigned (2 Sa. 5:4-5)

The capture of Jerusalem, the 'fortress of Zion', which becomes the 'city of David' (2 Sa. 5:7, 9), is followed by the description of David's growing power, with the explanation 'for YHWH, the God of hosts was with him' (v. 10). The building of David's palace on Zion is followed by the comment 'David knew that YHWH had established him as king over Israel and exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel' (v. 12). In a similar way the following account of his two battles with the Philistines (2 Sa. 5:17-25) notes that David on each occasion sought and received God's guidance (vv. 19, 23) and, on the second occasion, the promise of God's help in the battle (v. 24). On each occasion David defeats the Philistines.

Throughout 2 Samuel 2-5 the narrator has carefully emphasized two main points: that God was with David at every stage of his rise (and that this was believed in Israel: 2 Sa. 3:9, 18; 5:2); and that David at all times dealt righteously with the house of Saul (and was believed in Israel to have done so). So far, God has validated David's kingship; increasingly, David's rise has been marked by the deliverance he brings about for Israel (*cf.* 2 Sa. 5:12).[33]

2 Samuel 6 and 7 complete the account of David's rise to power, and further tie together the themes of David's kingship and

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[31]Some have queried the narrator's claims that David was innocent of Abner's death and the other deaths of Saul's adherents: see N.P. Lemche, 'David's Rise' *JSOT* 10 (1978) 2-25; J.C. Vanderkam, 'Davidic Complicity in the Deaths of Abner and Eshbaal: A Historical and Redactional Study', *JBL* 99 (1980), 521-39. Suggestions of this sort are hard either to prove or to disprove. A.A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (Dallas: Word, 1989) 61, suggests that in the case of Abner at least, it would not have been in David's interests to have him killed at this stage of negotiations between himself and the Israelite tribes.

[32]The narrator puts on their lips what might, in fact, be a plausible justification for Ish-Bosheth's death: 'This day YHWH has avenged my lord the king against Saul and his offspring' (2 Sa. 4:8; *cf.* the similar suggestion of Abishai at 1 Sa. 26:8). David rejects this, stating that Ish-Bosheth did not deserve to die (2 Sa. 4:11)

Israel's deliverance. The bringing up of the ark to Jerusalem resumes a narrative thread left hanging since 1 Samuel 7:1-2.[34] The story of the ark has been linked with that of the Philistine threat since its capture by the Philistines in 1 Samuel 4. With the defeat of the Philistines, Israel is established in the land, and this is marked by the ascent of the ark to the stronghold of Zion.[35] Hence the rejoicing as the ark ascends (2 Sa. 6:14-15) and hence also David's blessing of the people, further symbolized by the gifts of food to all the Israelite throng (vv. 18, 19). As Zion is also 'David's city' (vv. 12, 16; *cf.* v. 10 and also 5:7, 9), the bringing up of the ark represents a public validation of his kingship by God.[36]

None of this happens automatically. In the course of David's first attempt to bring up the ark (2 Sa. 6:1-11) Uzzah grasps hold of the ark to prevent it falling. God is angered by this and kills him. If David's first reaction is anger, his second is fear (vv. 8-10): the incident has served as a sharp reminder that the ark is not simply a mascot that will lend credence to David's kingship, but a symbol of God's presence. Will God consent to enter Jerusalem, David's city, and bestow his blessing on David's kingship? God's willingness to bless is shown by his treatment of Obed-Edom's household. Accordingly at the second attempt the ark goes up with rejoicing, David leading the celebrations.

The sharp dialogue between Michal and David at the end of

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[33]Again, a theme initiated in 1 Samuel: one can compare, for example the account of his rescue of Keilah (1 Sa. 23:1-6) or the account of the rescue of his men's families and possessions from the Amalekite raiders in 1 Sa. 30.

[34]The theory that parts of 1 and 2 Samuel originally belonged to a separate Ark Narrative has the merit that it draws attention to important thematic links between 2 Sa. 6-7 and 1 Sa. 4-7; though whether these passages ever formed an independent source seems to me questionable. See Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 30-39; also K. Van der Toorn and C. Houtman, 'David and the Ark', *JBL* 113 (1994) 209-31, esp. 223-27.

[35]The conquest of Jerusalem, one of the last non-Israelite strongholds in the land (whose fortress-like attributes are stressed in 2 Sa. 5:6-9) has itself marked an important strengthening of Israel's grip on the land. Jerusalem in these chapters appears to have the same significance that it has in some of the Psalms, that is, as a place in which God may be worshipped, and from which God's rule over the nations is established (*cf.* Pss. 2; 46-48; 99). Admittedly the issue of God's kingship is not explicitly raised, in contrast to the parallel account in 1 Ch. 17, where it is precisely the aspect of God's kingship over the nations which is made explicit by the insertion of a lengthy psalm. Yet the point is perhaps implicit in 2 Sa. 7:22-26, describing God's dealings with Israel and the nations' response.

[36]For an interpretation of 2 Sa. 6 which notes many of the same thematic connections, and also draws into the discussion the Ugaritic myth of Baal as king of the gods building his house, see C.L. Seow, *Myth, Drama, and the Politics of David's Dance* (HSM 46; Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1989), esp. 79-144.

ch. 6 clarifies many of the issues at stake. Michal accuses David of dishonouring himself publicly in a way unworthy of the 'king of Israel' (v. 20). David's response to this specific point is in v. 22: he wished to show humility before God, and the question of public dishonour did not arise. However, the reference to God 'who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house' (v. 21) suggests a further thought. When Samuel accuses Saul of disobeying God in 1 Samuel 15, he begins by suggesting that Saul is acting arrogantly (1 Sa. 15:17, referring ironically back to 9:21). Michal, too, fails to see the need to be humble before God, repeating her father's error. This exchange then, not only contrasts Saul and David, but also recalls the chief point at issue in Saul's rejection, the contrast between a king who will exercise his kingship in submission to God and one who will not. The one king has a future; the other (symbolized by his daughter, who is pointedly said to have borne no children till the day she died) does not. This is an issue which will resurface in 2 Samuel 12.

Thus, while it is through God's favour that David rises to power, the account of the bringing up of the ark and the subsequent exchange with Michal reiterates a point made elsewhere in the preceding narrative, portraying God as completely sovereign, as above institutions and those who represent them, even institutions of his own creating. This God can approve and can bless, but only on his own terms.

2 Samuel 6 having described the bringing up of the ark to Zion, ch. 7 describes the logical next step, David's proposal to build a temple for the ark, and God's response.[37] It is a coherent account, and is closely integrated into the narrative in which it now stands, developing themes which have run through the preceding narrative.[38] But it also has an importance which goes beyond its immediate context. This is marked by the lengthy speeches of God and David reviewing God's dealings with Israel in the past and setting out God's future purposes for Israel.[39] In both these respects, the chapter forms a counterpart to 1

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[37]It is possible that ch. 7 is out of chronological sequence, seeing that it begins with the statement that 'YHWH had given [David] rest from all his enemies round about' (v. 1), and that ch. 8 describes a number of further wars fought by David (Gordon, *Commentary*, 236). But there is in any case a logical sequence between chs. 6 and 7.

[38]See Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 77. For clear treatment of this chapter, which deals with much of the secondary literature, see A.A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 109-28; also T. Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel. A Study on the Formation and Development of Royal-Dynastic Ideology* (BZAW 142; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977) 81-117.

Samuel 12 (Samuel's farewell speech), setting out the terms of a relationship between God, king, and people, but with a much more positive tone than the earlier passage.[40]

The chapter begins by noting that 'David was settled [יָשַׁב] in his palace and YHWH had given him rest [הֵנִיחַ־לוֹ] from all his enemies around him' (2 Sa. 7:1), a reference to Deuteronomy 12, and particularly vv. 10-11, where the command to worship God in 'the place YHWH your God will choose as a dwelling for his name' is stated to apply specifically in the period when '[God] will give you rest [וְהֵנִיחַ לָכֶם] from all your enemies around you so that you will live in safety [וִישַׁבְתֶּם־בֶּטַח]'. The land now enjoys peace, and the ark is now on Zion, seemingly indicating God's choice of dwelling-place 'for his name'. Is it not, then, time to ratify this state of affairs by the building of a permanent dwelling-place to replace the tent in which the ark now rests (v. 2)?

There is a further consideration. Ishida has argued that in Mesopotamia 'one of the most important tasks of the king as the representative of society *vis-à-vis* the divine world was the building or repairing of the temple.'[41] This, of course, had implications for the king: a king who was permitted by the deity to build a temple thereby

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[39]The chapter has figured in the work of scholars who have argued for a Deuteronomistic History stretching from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings (developing the seminal ideas of M. Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* [ET of 1943 German edition; 2nd ed; JSOTS 15; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991]). For many 2 Sa. 7 should be classed alongside passages such as Joshua's Farewell Speech (Jos. 24), Samuel's Farewell Speech (1 Sa. 12) and Solomon's Prayer (1 Ki. 8), passages which mark major divisions in the history, and in which the hand of the Deuteronomistic editor can be clearly detected; see, for example, F.M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic. Essays in the History and Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1973) 241-58; J. Van Seters: *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1983) 271-77 (though Noth himself did not include 2 Sa. 7 with these passages). Whether or not these theories of Deuteronomistic historiography are correct, and whatever the redactional history of 2 Sa. 7, the chapter as it stands seems to me coherent, and it clearly does have a pivotal position in the surrounding narrative.

[40]Thus my interpretation of this chapter differs from that of L. Eslinger, *House of God or House of David. The Rhetoric of 2 Samuel 7* (JSOTS 164; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994). According to Eslinger, God in 2 Sa.7 appears to promise David more than he promised the Israelites when Saul became king, but in fact does not do so. However, 2 Sa. 7:15 explicitly draws a contrast between Saul's fate and that of David's descendants (a point Eslinger attempts to minimise [pp. 59-63], but in my view unsuccessfully): David's sons are *not* going to be treated like Saul.

[41]*The Royal Dynasties*, 85 (pp. 85-88 cite a number of relevant ancient Near Eastern texts).

received divine legitimation as king.[42] In a similar way, chs. 6 and 7 bring together temple-building and the future dynasty of David.

David's proposal is turned down. The basis for God's refusal does not seem to be that a temple represents an unacceptable religious development, for v. 13 confirms that David's son will build the temple.[43] Nor is it that the temple-building must be delayed until the God has brought about the security for Israel and David described in vv. 10-11, and said to lie in the future still:[44] v. 1 states clearly that God has already given David rest, hence vv. 10-11 must be describing the continuance of an already existing state of affairs, not a position that has still to be achieved. Rather, the point that seems to be emphasised in God's reply is that it is God who must take the lead in the areas touched on by David's proposal. It was he who brought up Israel from Egypt (v. 6) and he who raised up previous leaders for Israel (v. 7). He has brought David to his present position as king (vv. 8-9), and will bless Israel with a period of peace such as they have not so far experienced (vv. 10-11). The same principle of divine initiative applies concerning the temple.

God's refusal plays on two meanings of בַּיִת ('temple' or 'family'/'dynasty') so as to reinforce an underlying logic. David will not build God a temple ('Will you build me a בַּיִת to dwell in?', v. 5); rather, God will found a dynasty for David ('...YHWH will establish a בַּיִת for you', v. 11); and the first representative of this dynasty, David's son, will build God a temple as a sign that this line is established ('He will build a בַּיִת for my name, and I will found the throne of his kingship in perpetuity', v. 13). David does not have to perform a service for God to secure God's blessing; rather it is God who will perform the service for David. Hence the rejection of the temple is basically a question of aptness: to have David's son build God's 'house' (God having given David a 'house' first) is symbolically appropriate.[45] David's son will also be God's son (v. 14),[46] and the line

[42]One of the texts cited by Ishida (*ibid.*, 88), the seventh-century inscription of Nabopolassar) specifically links the building of a temple with the blessing of the dynasty of the king who carries out the building.

[43]I do not accept the view that vv. 5-7 represent a viewpoint dating from the exile according to which God had always been opposed to the temple; or that v. 13a is an insertion from another hand asserting that, on the contrary, it had enjoyed his favour. (Anderson, *2 Samuel* 118-19, 121-22).

[44]So Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 73-74; *idem*, *Commentary*, 238. I take the *Qatal* verbs with *vav* in vv. 10-11 as referring to the future, and not as *perfectivum copulativum* (against Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 120); the *Qatal* verbs in vv. 12-14 clearly have a future reference, which suggests that the same should apply to vv. 10-11.

of kings through him will be established 'in perpetuity' (עַד עוֹלָם, v. 16; *cf.* v. 13), for all that it may on occasion be necessary to discipline them 'with the rod of men, and with the blows of the sons of men' (v. 14).

It has been much debated what exactly is promised to David in this passage. It is usual to regard this passage as speaking of an unconditional commitment on God's part to David and his line (hence it lasts 'for ever', because it cannot be violated by human disobedience), and to contrast this with passages in which the continuance of a royal dynasty descended from David is made dependent on conditions (*e.g.*, 1 Ki. 8:25; 9:4-5).[47] In my view, though this passage may speak of an unconditional (*i.e.*, eternal) commitment, it is perhaps truer to say that it is underdetermined in this respect.[48] In particular, the discipline to be administered by 'the rod of men, and the blows of the sons of men' could involve severe punishment.[49]

Leaving aside this issue, however, God in vv. 5-16 promises David a stable dynasty (in contrast to that of Saul), and, linked to this,

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[45]Solomon is to build 'a house for my name' (v. 13). This may reflect a somewhat abstract notion of God's presence which has been seen as characteristically Deuteronomic (see Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 122). However the contrast between this phrase and David's proposal of a 'house to dwell in' (vv. 2, 5, 6) can also be explained with reference to the internal rhetoric of 2 Sa. 7: it is appropriate here to stress that God is in no sense bound to the temple (he will never be David's debtor); and the fact that God gives David a name (v. 8) before David's son builds a 'house for my name' is in keeping with a chapter which constantly stresses God's initiative.

[46]For the use of the adoption metaphor for kingship in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East, see Ishida, *Royal Dynasties*, 108-9.

[47]See, for example, M. Tsevat, 'The Steadfast House. What was David Promised in 2 Samuel 7?' in *The Meaning of the Book of Job and Other Studies* (New York: Ktav, 1980) 101-117; R.D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTS 18; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981) 99-108. See also I.W. Provan's treatment of this point with regard to the books of Kings in his essay in this volume.

[48]Firstly, לְעוֹלָם and עַד עוֹלָם need not mean 'for ever', 'eternally', but can be used to denote a more limited time span, the endurance of something within its natural limits (see Tsevat, 'The Steadfast House', 106-7; Eslinger, *House of God*, 46-48). Already in 1 Samuel God has revoked a promise given עַד עוֹלָם (1 Sa. 2:30). Secondly, we must distinguish in 2 Sa. 7:11-16 between what is promised to David's son (everything here spoken of does happen to Solomon in 1 Ki. 1-11, including his sinning and his suffering a punishment which is more lenient than that endured by Saul) and what is said concerning David's kingdom and that of his son, which is subject to the reservations noted above concerning the vagueness of the terms לְעוֹלָם and עַד עוֹלָם. This is not to deny that other passages (1 Ki. 11:36; 15:4; and especially, Ps. 89) treat the promise to David as having enduring effect; but it may suggest that these passages mark something of a development with respect to 2 Sa. 7, rather than simply restating the terms of this passage.

promises Israel greater stability than at any time previously. These are, accordingly, the issues which David touches on in his prayer of response (vv. 18-29): God has brought David this far (vv. 18-19), and it has been his initiative (vv. 20-21); God has shown his commitment to Israel in the past, and demonstrated his power before the nations by what he has done for them (vv. 22-24); as he 'got himself a name' by bringing Israel into the land (v. 23), so now, through his establishment of David's house may men say 'YHWH almighty is God over Israel!' (vv. 25-26). God has made the promise to David's house: now let him fulfil it (vv. 27-29).[50]

IV. David in 2 Samuel 8-24

Like the poetic texts with which we started, ch. 7, coming as the climax to the account of David's rise, sets out a vision of how God can bless his people Israel through his king. The following account of David as king (2 Sa. 8-20) shows how the later years of his kingship in many ways failed to realize this vision.[51] The Samuel Appendix (2 Sa. 21-24) concludes the account of David by bringing together a variety of texts which combine portrayals of David at his best and at far less than his best. Both blocks of material form an important part of the picture of David presented by 1 and 2 Samuel as a whole; and in both blocks God's role as judge of his chosen king is emphasized.

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[49]Disaffection and rebellion in Israel? Military defeats? Invasion? Even exile? In the light of v. 14, Tsevat's comment ('The Steadfast House', 103) that 2 Sa. 7:11-16 is a 'blank cheque' is an overstatement.

[50]Eslinger interprets David's prayer as a sustained attempt to twist God's words in vv. 5-16 in his favour. So, for example, in vv. 25-26 David attempts to persuade God that the greatness of his name depends on the establishment of David's house, as a way of securing blessing for his house (pp. 82-84). I do not read David's words this way. David's prayer introduces no element that God has not already allowed (even the role of David's dynasty in exalting God's name has been stressed in v. 13: 'he will build a house for my name'). David does not, in effect, say 'You must bless my house in order for your name to be great'; but, 'Since you have chosen to bless my house in order to make your name great (as you previously made your name great by bringing Israel into their land), may you indeed bless my house.'

[51]For the view that 'History of David as King' is a better rubric than 'Succession Narrative' for the following account, see Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 81-94, esp. 85-86. *Cf.* also J.G. McConville, *Grace in the End: A Study in Deuteronomic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993) 118: 'The idea that [2 Sa. 9-20] was essentially the story that explained how David was succeeded by Solomon was never satisfactory, because it saw no function in the wider story for the failure of David and the crisis in both his own household and the state that ensued.'

1. David in 2 Samuel 8-20

Literary readings of 2 Samuel 8-20 abound.[52] My concern here is with how the narrator constantly represents the events described in these chapters as threats to, or even reversals of, the vision of 2 Samuel 7.[53] The note of reversal is clearest in c. 12, where David is brought to book for his adultery with Bathsheba: in ch. 7 God sent the prophet Nathan to give David a promise concerning a son for whom he would establish a house (dynasty), and concerning the peace which Israel would enjoy; in ch. 12 God sends Nathan to pronounce a judgement on David that will involve the death of his infant son, and to utter the threat that 'the sword shall never depart from your house' (2 Sa. 12:10). Everything that follows in 2 Samuel 13-20 flows from this initial judgement. This may be illustrated by tracing three themes through these chapters.

Firstly, the narrator for a long time leaves it unclear whether or not David is to be rejected like Saul. There are ominous similarities between Nathan's denunciation of David and Samuel's denunciation of Saul in 1 Samuel 15: both passages begin by noting that God anointed Saul/David as king over Israel (1 Sa. 15:17; 2 Sa. 12:7); and both speak of 'one close to you' (רֵעַ) to whom God will give something belonging to them as king, respectively Saul's kingship (1 Sa. 15:28) and David's wives (2 Sa. 12:11). In a passage where David has just been reminded how he took over his master's wives when he displaced him as king (2 Sa. 12:8), the implication may well be that David, too, is to be deposed as Saul was.[54] The only two mitigating factors in ch. 12 are the promise that David will not die (v. 13) and the word sent to him that

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[52]See, for example, D.M. Gunn, *The Story of King David* (JSOTS 6; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1978); C. Conroy, *Absalom Absalom! Narrative and Language in 2 Samuel 13-20* (Analecta Biblica 81; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1978); F.H. Polak, 'David's Kingship—a Precarious Equilibrium' in H.G. Reventlow, Y. Hoffman, B. Uffenheimer (eds.), *Politics and Theopolitics in the Bible and Postbiblical Literature* (JSOTS 171; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 119-147.

[53]Thus my approach is different from that of J. Van Seters (*In Search of History*, 277-91) who treats 2 Sa. 9-20 (also 2:8-4:12) and 1 Ki. 1-2 as an interpolation into the Deuteronomistic History, which conflicts with the positive account of David generally found throughout Samuel and Kings. P.K. McCarter, *II Samuel* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984) 7-16 similarly attempts to explain the presence of positive and negative elements by redactional hypotheses. I agree with these scholars in their characterisation of material as favourable or otherwise towards David, but not in their allocation of these two types of material to separate sources. On this question, see further R.P. Gordon, 'In Search of David: The David Tradition in Recent Study' in A.R. Millard, J.K. Hoffmeier and D.W. Baker (eds.), *Faith, Tradition and History: Old Testament Historiography in its Near Eastern Context* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994) 285-98; and Polak, 'David's Kingship', 119-28.

his second child by Bathsheba, Solomon, is loved by God (vv. 24-25); neither of which make it plain what will happen to David as king. When David, therefore, goes into a kind of exile after learning of Absalom's revolt, it is not clear whether he will ever be king again. David's refusal to take the ark with him (2 Sa. 15:25-26), makes precisely this point: 'If I find favour in YHWH's eyes, he will bring me back... But if he says, "I am not pleased with you," then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him.'[55] In a similar way, the incident in which Shimei curses David (2 Sa. 16:5-14) raises the possibility of an unexpected fulfilment of the promise of ch. 7, in which David is *rejected in favour of* his son (16:8): '"YHWH has handed the kingdom over to your son Absalom. You have come to ruin because you are a man of blood!"' It is only when Hushai's counsel prevails over Ahithophel's that it becomes plain which way events will go, a turning point marked by the narrator's comment that 'YHWH had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel to bring disaster on Absalom' (17:14). The narrator, therefore, leaves open for a long time the question of whether David will survive as king, suggesting a serious threat to the earlier promise of a throne to be established in perpetuity (2 Sa. 7:16).

Secondly, three of David's sons die, his infant son by Bathsheba, Amnon and Absalom. The narrator describes the effect on David of each son's death, in three scenes which are each, in their different ways, emotionally highly charged (2 Sa. 12:16-23; 13:30-36; 18:31-33). The final scene represents the climax, its impact heightened by the preceding messenger scene which dwells on David's hopes and fears (18:19-30). As David in his grief repeats the word 'son' (18:33; 19:4) we feel the cumulative effect of the three deaths on him. Again, the contrast with ch. 7 is clear: here are three sons of David who have not have not experienced God's 'favour' (contrast 7:15).

Thirdly, if 2 Samuel 7 has spoken of a peace which Israel will enjoy (vv. 10-11), the events of Absalom's rebellion and its aftermath describe various disruptions of this peace, from the general weeping which ensues when David leaves Jerusalem (15:23), to the many Israelites killed in the battle between David's and Absalom's men

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[54]Saul's and David's offences against God are also portrayed in the same tones: David, who proclaimed his humility before God in a passage which distinguished his behaviour from Saul's (2 Sa. 6:20-23), is now, like Saul accused of contempt for the word of God (2 Sa. 12:9, 10; *cf.* 1 Sa. 15:26).

[55]Contrast the situation when David is on the run from Saul in 1 Samuel, where the ark is a symbol of God's presence with him (see especially 1 Sa. 23:6).

(18:6-8), to the discord between the men of Israel and the men of Judah which rumbles on after that battle (19:41-20:2) and only reaches some sort of resolution when Joab deals with the troublemaker Sheba son of Bicri (20:14-22).[56]

Many of the events of the latter part of David's kingship, therefore, stand in sharp contradiction to the promise of 2 Samuel 7. This promise is not done away with, nor is David finally rejected; but in his later years he fails to realize the blessings promised in his own kingship. If he survives, he does little more than that.[57]

2. The Samuel Appendix (2 Sa. 21-24)

When we come, then, to David's Thanksgiving and David's Last Words, we read them in the light of the decline in David's kingdom which 2 Samuel 11-20 have traced.

These two poems form the centrepiece of the Samuel Appendix (2 Sa. 21-24), which has a clear concentric structure. On either side of them are two passages describing the deeds of David's fighting men (21:15-22; 23:8-39); and the Appendix is enclosed by accounts of a famine (21:1-14) and a plague (ch. 24) which are linked by the comment that occurs at the end of both of them ('YHWH answered prayer on behalf of the land', 21:14; 24:25).[58]

Scholars differ over the relationship between the two poems (and the Appendix of which they form a part) and the preceding narrative. Some see the Appendix as supplying a positive conclusion to the books of Samuel. Whedbee argues that many of the 'modes of

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[56]See Conroy, *Absalom Absalom!*, 97-101 on the overtones of death and discord which at various points mar the account of David's return (19:11, 22, 23, 24, 29, 35, 38; 20:3, 19, 22).

[57]Polak believes that David in these chapters displays a growing 'moral consciousness' ('David's Kingship', 137-8): 'David... has to atone for his sins by ever-increasing punishment until he retains his moral awareness...Only Absalom's death purges him sufficiently to justify his rescue from utter ruin; only now does he attain full understanding of his responsibility.' But it is hard to see signs of greater moral awareness in chs. 19-20; rather, it might be argued, the full extent of David's punishment becomes apparent in his reaction to Absalom's death, after which he is a broken and weak man.

[58]*1 & 2 Samuel*, 95. Against the tendency of some to regard these chapters as an intrusion into a 'Succession Narrative' which only ends in 1 Ki. 1-2, Gordon notes that the position of the Appendix is in fact appropriate, rounding off the account of David as king. 1 Ki. 1-2, which presents 'an interleaving of the biographies of David and Solomon' has a significantly different focus from that of 2 Sa. 9-20. See also G.T. Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct: A Study in the Sapientializing of the Old Testament* (BZAW 151; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980) 145-48.

legitimation' for David's kingship listed by 2 Samuel 5-8 are reaffirmed in the Appendix. Accordingly, 'these chapters function powerfully to bring to a climax central themes at work in David's reign and to set the stage for the Solomonic succession.'[59] Watts and Sheppard[60] think that the point of the Appendix is to make it plain that David's success was due to his piety. Watts' view is also expressed in his more detailed views on Hannah's Song and David's Thanksgiving:

> The psalms do not reflect the subtlety of the narrative and so miss many thematic nuances which the prose preserves. Instead, they expound a basic theme with poetic claims that cannot be misunderstood: YHWH's purposes were accomplished through David.[61]

This, however, is perhaps a one-sided view of the relationship between the poems and the preceding narratives. Brueggemann has argued that, read in the light of the preceding narrative, and also in their present setting in the Samuel Appendix, the poetic texts instantly self-destruct.[62] The Bathsheba incident has previously shown David abusing his power; and the famine account (21:1-14) leaves hanging over David the suspicion of having invented an oracle in order to get rid of Saulide adherents. Hence, when David claims 'YHWH has dealt with me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands...' (2 Sa. 22:21) or asks 'Is not my house right with God?' (2 Sa. 23:5), we recognize that these are false claims. In Brueggemann's view, the two poems articulate dynastic pretensions which are no sooner stated than they are punctured.[63] The first list of David's mighty men (2 Sa. 21:15-22) similarly 'assaults' royal theology: David's men swear an oath that they will never again allow 'the lamp of Israel' to be endangered in battle, but the following account of the exploits of

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[59] J.W. Whedbee, 'On Divine and Human Bonds: The Tragedy of the House of David' in G.M. Tucker *et al.* (eds.), *Canon, Theology, and Old Testament Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 147-165, esp. 162-63 (quotation from p. 163).

[60] Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 116-17; Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct*, 157-58.

[61] *Psalm and Story*, 106. Compare also his comments on p. 109: 'David's Thanksgiving, together with Hannah's Song and the Last Words, enunciates a vision of David as the ideal king which has more to do with YHWH's relationship to him than with the particulars of David's career. In this way, they superimpose an idealized characterization of him on the detailed narratives of his reign.'

[62] '2 Samuel 21-24: An Appendix of Deconstruction?', *CBQ* 50 (1988) 383-97; see also *idem*, *First and Second Samuel. A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox, 1990) 336-57.

[63] *Art. cit.*, 387-90.

David's men (vv. 18-22) show that David is far from indispensable. 'The slogan is deliberately placed in a vacuum where it appears ludicrous.'[64]

Over against these texts, the last two sections of the Appendix depict another David. In the lists of David's mighty men (23:8-39) David appears as only one among many warriors of Israel, who so values the lives of his men that he will not drink water that they have brought him at personal risk (23:15-17). This list evinces a 'remarkable democratizing tendency', perhaps evoking an earlier period in David's life when he modelled a more noble style of leadership.[65] The position of Uriah the Hittite's name at the end of the list of 'the Thirty' (23:39) draws a pointed contrast, reminding us of the destructive capacity of 'royal hubris'.[66] Lastly, in ch. 24, David undergoes a striking transition: incited by God, he holds a census of Israel, seemingly to glory in his own power (vv. 1-3); but then he is conscience- stricken at what he has done and asks for his guilt to be taken away (v. 10); finally, as a plague ravages Israel, David asks that God punish himself and his family and not his innocent subjects (v. 17), and then at his own cost makes the offerings which bring the plague to an end (vv. 24-25). David in the narrative has abandoned 'the role of the potentate who will moblize all his power for his own ambitious and oppressive ends' and has reached the position where:

> The initiative is with YHWH. David, proper David, is an obedient servant of his Lord, a child who cries out in need. David understands that petition, empty-handed petition, is his proper posture before YHWH, as it is for any Israelite.[67]

On Brueggemann's view, then, the Samuel Appendix stands in a complex relationship to the account of David as king: it contains texts whose claims collapse when read in their wider context (including parts of that earlier account); and itself moves from David's abuse of royal power (21:1-14) to his humility before God (ch. 24), implicitly criticizing earlier such abuses and the royal ideology which made them possible:

> The appendix wishes to assert that the new Davidic world of guaranteeing oracle (7:1-17), imperial wars (8:1-14) and bureaucratic power

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[64]*Art. cit.*, 387.
[65]*Art. cit.*, 390-92; quotation from p. 390.
[66]*Art. cit.*, 391.
[67]*Art. cit.*, 393 (both quotations).

> (8:15-18) will lead to death. The appendix urges a return to a more lively faith and simpler modes of power.[68]

There are many valuable insights in Brueggemann's reading. Other observations may reinforce it. For example, if 23:39 is a deliberate reference back to the murder of Uriah, then the reference to 'Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite' a few verses earlier (v. 34) is similar, for Eliam was Bathsheba's father (2 Sa. 11:3).[69]

However, Brueggemann's approach seems questionable at some points. Firstly, 2 Samuel 21:1-14 is capable of interpretation in a way more favourable to David. It is the narrator who states that Saul had put Gibeonites to death (2 Sa. 21:2); this is not simply an unsubstantiated claim made by David.[70] Linked to this, it is hard to believe that a narrator who lays so much stress on God's role throughout the narrative means to portray David's action as based on a transparent fiction.[71] Alien though the concept may seem to us, the narrator seems to view corporate guilt as a reality to be reckoned with. David, arguably, is commended by the narrator for putting away the guilt which has brought famine on Israel, and also for his (ultimately) honourable treatment of the bones of Saul's descendants.[72] Secondly, the point of 2 Sa. 21:17 is that David, as 'the lamp of Israel' is too precious to be risked in battle. The fact that in the following verses other men take the lead in single combat underscores David's value (they choose to fight instead of him), rather than deflating a piece of royal ideology by suggesting David's dispensability. Thirdly, 2 Samuel 7 and 24 seem to me ideologically quite close, rather than representing the opposite poles of establishment religion and living faith in God. Both chapters stress God's sovereignty, and in both David expresses his dependence him. Humility before God, so clearly displayed by David in ch. 24, is also a central issue in chs. 6 and 7.[73]

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[68]*Art. cit.*, 395

[69]J.W. Wesselius, 'Joab's Death and the Succession Narrative', *VT* 40 (1990) 336-51, esp. 349-51.

[70]Against Brueggemann, *art. cit.*, 386.

[71]'David sought the face of YHWH' (v.1); 'YHWH said "It is on account of Saul"' (v. 2); '"How shall I make amends so that you will bless YHWH's inheritance?"' (v. 3); '"...so that we may expose them before YHWH at Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of YHWH"' (v. 7); 'they exposed them before YHWH' (v. 9); 'after that, God answered prayer on behalf of the land' (v. 14).

[72]On this narrative see J.S. Kaminsky, *Corporate Responsibility in the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTS 196; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 96-113.

[73]2 Sa. 24 is also linked to 2 Sa. 12 by David's confession 'I have sinned' (חָטָאתִי, 12:13; 24:10). That chapter, as argued above, shares many themes with ch. 7.

McConville's brief study of the Samuel Appendix suggests that it recapitulates a movement already apparent in the account of David as king, from optimistic beginning to unhappier ending: 'The darkening of expectation that characterizes the Appendix is in keeping with the sequence of the dynastic oracle and the SN.'[74] McConville lays weight on the fact that in the Appendix David, for all the optimism expressed in the central poems, ends up like Saul in bringing disaster on Israel. Hence, David turns out to be no better than Saul, and it cannot be claimed that Saul's and David's kingships represent two opposed archetypes:

> Saul is not merely an unsatisfactory overture to the main program; the covenant, now involving a human king, continues to run a rough course [*sc.* under David], as it had done under the judges.[75]

My own reading of 2 Samuel 7-20 agrees with McConville's. However, even in the Appendix David arguably comes off better than Saul: Saul's wild 'zeal for Israel and Judah' (2 Sa. 21:2) violates an Israelite oath and leaves nothing but blood guilt behind it; David, guilty of an equally rash act in ch. 24, at least successfully puts an end to the plague that ensues. And in the main Samuel narratives, David accomplishes much more for Israel than Saul, for all that his kingship enters upon a decline in its latter years.The narrator, in my view, does not regard the one as essentially no better than the other.

In interpreting the two central poetic texts of the Appendix, I would lay weight on the introduction to David's Thanksgiving (2 Sa. 22:1): 'David sang... this song when YHWH delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.' That is, the Thanksgiving speaks of David as he was at a certain stage—David at his best, in other words. Like Hannah's Song this poem is as much about God as it is about any human king, and suggests that David attains best when exercising his kingship in grateful submission to God. In a similar way I would read 2 Samuel 23:5 as a generalizing, positive presentation of David's rule, not as a claim that he always practised perfect justice. On this reading, the poetic texts represent an ideal: David as he should always have been, not as he always was.[76]

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[74]McConville, *Grace in the End,* 116-19; quotation from p. 118.
[75]*Ibid.*, 119.
[76]Carlson (*David the Chosen King* 253, 257) suggests that the vision of a perfect Davidic king in David's Thanksgiving and David's Last Words has been incorporated in the Appendix in order to underscore the critique of David in the latter chapters of 2 Samuel.

Perhaps the 'early morning' imagery of 2 Sa. 23:3-4 suggests the fragility of the ideal. The two lists of fighting men on either side of these poems also give positive pictures of David: as one who inspires the loyalty of his men and is in turn, loyal to them. But the conclusion of the second list (23:34, 39) notes that David did not always treat his men as their loyalty deserved. And lastly, 2 Samuel 24 suggests how destructive David's power as king can be if it is not tempered by humility before God.

V. Conclusion

The Samuel Appendix, therefore, recapitulates in miniature the main contrast drawn by the books of Samuel as a whole. Examination of the three poetic passages with which I began and the narratives they enclose has suggested that the writer/editor wishes to make a clear distinction in his presentation of David as king. The poetic passages, placed at key points of the structure of 1 and 2 Samuel, evoke an expectation concerning God's king which forms an important part of the overall message of the book. Yet the first of these three texts also highlights what is to be a keynote of the subsequent accounts, that God retains absolute sovereignty, and will judge and bless as he sees fit; and by the end of 2 Samuel we have seen how David as king has fallen short of the ideal represented by the three texts, and has been subject to God's judgement. The ideal remains intact, but the tensions between David's Thanksgiving/David's Last Words and the preceding narrative remains unresolved.

Equally, 2 Samuel 7 clearly contains what may, in one possible sense of the term, be called messianic expectations: here are promises relating to a future line of anointed kings, promises which have explicitly not been set aside by the end of 2 Samuel. Yet 2 Samuel 7 is carefully tied into a larger account which shows David sinning against God and bringing judgement on his own household and disunity in Israel: the motifs of house, son, and peace, elements of blessing in 2 Samuel 7, become elements of a curse in ch. 12: and that curse is worked out in the account following. The promise of a dynasty of kings remains in force; but David's own history as king shows an ominous decline which comes close to calling the whole venture into question.

If we are to speak, then, of a messianic expectation in the books of Samuel, our view must include both elements of this deliberately

emphasised antinomy: the ideal, the hope, and David's disappointing shortcomings. A similar tension is, of course, also found in various prophetic texts, which also hold onto the ideal represented by the figure of David, but do so with the clear awareness that representatives of David's line have not lived up to that ideal (*e.g.*, Am. 9:11-15; Is. 11:1-2; Je. 23:5). These texts draw a clear distinction between an unsatisfactory present and a glorious future to be inaugurated by a coming descendant of David. That distinction is nothing like so clear in Samuel: David's kingship is still viable by the end of 2 Samuel, enjoying God's and the people's support (not for nothing have some scholars seen 2 Sa. 9-20 and 1 Ki. 1-2 as a 'succession narrative'). Expectation and present reality have not as yet fully diverged. Yet the books of Samuel have gone at least partly along the way towards the position represented by the prophetic texts. David's own shortcomings raise questions concerning the kingdom he inaugurates, yet at his best he represents an ideal. If the books of Samuel do not resolve this tension, they do at any rate clearly mark out its contours.[77]

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[77]*cf.* Polak, *David's Kingship* 141-42

CHAPTER 4

THE MESSIAH IN THE BOOKS OF KINGS

Iain W. Provan

Summary

Recent developments in our understanding of the nature of Old Testament narrative and of the activity of reading texts invite reconsideration of the widely held opinion that the book of Kings cannot be regarded as in any true sense a messianic book. Even when Kings is taken on its own terms, the evidence suggests otherwise. The figures of Solomon, Hezekiah and Josiah in particular provide us with clues as to the kind of ideal future king the authors had in mind. That this ideal king cannot reasonably be distinguished from a 'Messiah' is especially clear when the book of Kings is read in its Old Testament context as a prophetic book.

I. Introduction

The book of Kings may not immediately strike the reader of this essay-collection as very promising territory in which to hunt for messianic secrets. The *a priori* implausibility of the venture (as it might seem to many) has as much to do with the general trend of scholarly thinking about messianism in the Old Testament in the last three hundred years as it has, more particularly, with the recent history of interpretation of the book of Kings itself.

On the one hand, there has been something of a general reaction in Europe (and later elsewhere) since the beginning of the eighteenth century against those reading practices of the early and medieval church which found references to the Messiah widely scattered throughout the Old Testament, even in places where the 'plain sense' of the Hebrew text could not obviously support the interpretation offered. As early as 1724 the Deist Anthony Collins, in his *Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*, argued that the New Testament interpretation of even fairly important 'messianic' passages (*e.g.*, Is. 7:14) could not be sustained in terms of the literal, historical sense of those passages. The force of this kind of criticism was keenly felt by all those for whom the 'plain meaning' of the Old Testament was important, whether they were Protestant Christians intent on reading it as Scripture or other interested parties intent on reading it simply as historical artifact. In fact, Collins' view of the proper method of approach to the Old Testament—that it must be studied historically in the first instance without reference to the New Testament—in due course became the dominant view not only in the universities but also in the Protestant Christian Church, right across the theological spectrum. The corollary was the birth of a discipline of Old Testament Studies which saw as its first task the explication of the Old Testament texts in their own terms rather than in relation to either New Testament or Christian theology; and one of the consequences of this was a significant reduction in the number of Old Testament passages which could 'safely' be claimed as messianic. The burden of proof, in fact, now fell firmly on those who wished to claim that passages had this character, particularly when it was realised the extent to which the language and imagery which they contained could be explained in terms of high concepts of kingship which Israel shared with her neighbours. How far were 'messianic' passages truly messianic, then, and how far did they concern kings of actual historical experience described in idealized (but fairly stereotypical) language?

Increasingly the tendency was to assume the latter unless the former could be proved 'beyond reasonable doubt'. A broad scholarly orthodoxy on the question emerged, in which it was claimed that the majority of the passages which popular theology had interpreted as messianic were in fact concerned with the kings of historical experience, the ideal of kingship becoming the expectation of a future Messiah only in the post-exilic period.[1] It is no surprise that in this general context the book of Kings, which is itself in large measure a *description* of the kings of historical experience, should not immediately be thought of as a book where messianism might be found.

Nor has the recent history of interpretation of the book of Kings itself encouraged readers to think of it as a messianic book to any great degree. The extent to which the book looks to the future at all has in fact been questioned, most famously by Martin Noth,[2] who argued that Kings was a fundamentally pessimistic work designed simply to tell the story of Israel's downfall and of the end of her monarchy. Even those who have disagreed with Noth, however, in arguing for future hope in Kings have not generally highlighted messianism as an important strand of that hope.[3] The notable exception has been von Rad,[4] who finds an unresolved tension in the book between judgment and hope, the latter being a messianic hope based on the promise to the house of David of an everlasting dynasty. The closing verses of 2 Kings (25:27-30) represent a hint that the Davidic line will one day be restored through a descendant of Jehoiachin, who remains alive in Babylon. Many commentators, however, find the hope allegedly present here so muted as to be virtually unexpressed; and many, therefore, have found it difficult to follow von Rad on this point.[5] If

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[1]*Cf.*, for example, the influential S. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (ET; Oxford: Blackwell, 1956).

[2]M. Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (ET; 2nd. ed; JSOTS 15; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991).

[3]We may note, *e.g.*, H.W. Wolff, 'The Kerygma of the Deuteronomic Historical Work', in W. Brueggemann and H.W. Wolff (eds.), *The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1975) 83-100, who contends that in the Deuteronomistic History as a whole there is a pattern of repentance and forgiveness which suggests that the author still held out hope for a restoration of God's blessing; and W. Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte* (FRLANT 108; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), who argues that in the final redaction of Kings a future hope is envisaged for Israel if she is obedient to the Deuteronomic law.

[4]G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 1 (ET; London: SCM, 1962) 334-47.

[5]A notable exception is B.S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (London: SCM, 1979) 281-301.

hope exists at all in Kings, it has been 'democratized'. Kingly figures belong to the unsatisfactory past from which Israel must now break free in corporate dependence upon the God who restores from exile.

It might seem, then, that the climate is not favourable to the project in view here. Yet the climate is itself changing once again with regard to the way in which Old Testament narrative texts are being read. If it is true that post-Enlightenment Old Testament scholarship has, on the whole, read these texts piecemeal, believing them to be composite and largely incoherent entities and focusing upon the parts rather than the whole; then it is equally true that in the past two decades narrative criticism has subjected the assumption of incoherence and its allied exegetical practices to searching critique.[6] There has been a recovery of a sense of the whole, where books like Kings are concerned; and with that, a recovery of the sense of the literary artistry which binds the whole together.[7] Again, if it is true that the past three hundred years has seen the gradual breakdown of the Bible story as the defining story of Western culture, the unified narrative whole which set the context for individual human narratives coming generally to be understood, rather, as a collection of unrelated fragments requiring recontextualisation by the individual reader in order to be properly understood; then it is equally true that in the past two decades this fragmentation of the Bible—book separated from book, author set against author—has come under intense scrutiny. Is it really the case that individual Old Testament books are read with greater integrity if they are read in isolation from their neighbours in the first instance? Is it really the case that we gain a more 'objective' grasp of what an Old Testament book has to say if we try to bracket out wider contexts of interpretation while we are reading it? Scepticism is, in fact, increasingly voiced in respect of the historical-critical method in areas quite other than the traditional conservative heartlands.[8] Why should we believe that the most appropriate way to read a book like Kings is in isolation from the remainder of the Old Testament, when the high

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[6]We may note among many examples J. Licht, *Storytelling in the Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1978); R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, (London: SPCK, 1981); M. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985); D.M. Gunn and D.N. Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: OUP, 1993).

[7]Some recent commentaries on Kings reveal the influence of the change in climate in particularly obvious respects, *e.g.*, B.O. Long, *1 King, with an Introduction to Historical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) and *2 Kings* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991); T.R. Hobbs, *2 Kings* (Waco: Word, 1985); and R.D. Nelson, *First and Second Kings* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1987).

level of intertextuality that exists between Kings and other Old Testament books itself invites us to do otherwise?[9] Why should we believe at all that books like Kings are read more 'objectively' if read in conscious disregard of the New Testament and of Christian theology, when all readings are so obviously affected by the contexts in which they are carried out and when noncontextual reading is impossible? These are good questions; and in the absence of satisfactory answers, many have begun to wonder whether 'historical' reading of the Old Testament as it has been widely practised in the modern period is a good thing.

The climate is changing; the burden of proof has been more fairly distributed; and it is as the chilly winds of change are blowing and the baggage is being shared around that we come to reexamine this question of messianism and the book of Kings. Is messianism after all to be found in this book? My brief answer is in the affirmative; my lengthier and more detailed answer will occupy the remainder of this essay.

II. 2 Kings 25:27-30

I begin where von Rad placed so much of his emphasis—at the end. How is 2 Kings 25:27-30 to be read? It might be taken simply as the final nail in the coffin which the authors have so skilfully been preparing for Israel throughout the preceding chapters of the book. Solomon's glory has in the end departed to Babylon. The empire has dissolved. The Babylonian king has destroyed Solomon's city, his palace and his temple; he controls his empire, and he possesses all his wealth. Now Solomon's last-surviving successor (so far as we know)

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[8]We may note here, *e.g.*, two scholars who approach the question from quite different angles, but nevertheless share this scepticism to different degrees: Childs, *Introduction*, and J.D. Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993).

[9]I mean by intertextuality the way in which individual books either share portions of text with other books (*e.g.*, 2 Ki. 18:17-20:19 and Is. 36:1-38:8; 38:21-39:8; 2 Ki. 24:18-25:30 and Je. 52:1-34), or quote them (*e.g.*, 1 Ki. 22:28 and Mi. 1:2), or otherwise reveal that they are aware of them (*e.g.*, by narrating stories in such a manner that they evoke other stories with which they might usefully be compared or contrasted). *Cf.* further on the general topic M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: OUP, 1985); D.A. Carson and H.G.M. Williamson (eds.), *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture. Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars* (Cambridge: CUP, 1988) 25-83.

sits, amply provided for, at the Babylonian king's table—the great symbol of imperial power (*cf.* the reference to Solomon's table in 1 Ki. 4:27). He sits; he eats; and then (it is implied) he dies. The exiles (it is also implied) ought to behave in the same way, accepting the advice of Gedaliah to the people in Judah: 'Settle down… serve the king… and it will go well with you' (2 Ki. 25:24).

Yet in the context of the book of Kings taken as a whole, it is difficult to believe that this is all there is to it; and that is the immediate context, of course, in which 2 Kings 25:27-30 must be read. We cannot read the final words of the story without due attention to all the words which have preceded them and prepared us for them. The first thing to notice here is the simple fact that the authors of Kings have chosen to tell us that Jehoiachin lived on at all (in contrast to Jehoahaz, 2 Ki. 23:34), when they could have allowed him to dwell in obscurity (with Zedekiah, 2 Ki. 24:18-25:7). They did not need to recount this part of Jehoiachin's tale. They have also chosen to contrast the fate of Jehoiachin's family (exile, 24:15) very clearly with that of Zedekiah's (death, 25:7). It is Zedekiah, and not Jehoiachin, who ends up effectively as the 'eunuch in Babylon' that Isaiah had foreseen (20:18), a mutilated man deprived of heirs who might later claim the throne. Jehoiachin, by contrast, has living descendants. The significance of this mere fact is more clearly seen when we consider, first of all, the general theme of promise as it appears in Kings; and secondly, the whole movement of the narrative in 2 Kings up to this point.

Promise is a much more prominent theme in Kings than has sometimes been supposed. The two most important divine promises referred to are those given to David, on the one hand, and to the patriarchs, on the other. The promise to David, that he should have an eternal dynasty, appears in Kings in a curiously paradoxical form. For much of the narrative it provides us with an explanation as to why the Davidic dynasty survives, when other dynasties do not, *in spite of* the disobedience of David's successors (*e.g.*, 1 Ki. 11:36; 15:4). It is viewed, in other words, as unconditional. Judah's fate is not to be the same as Israel's, Jerusalem's fate is to be different from Samaria's, because God has promised David a 'lamp', a descendant who will always sit on his throne. Thus when Solomon sins the Davidic line does not lose the throne entirely, but retains 'one tribe' (1 Ki. 11:36) in the meantime, with the prospect of restoring its dominion at some time in the future (1 Ki. 11:39). When Abijam sins, likewise, his son still retains the Judean throne (1 Ki. 15:4). The background here is evidently the promise to David as it is recorded in 2 Samuel 7, where the sins of

David's descendants are to be punished by the 'rod of men' rather than by the kind of divine rejection experienced by Saul (2 Sa. 7:14-16). It is this promise that makes the ultimate difference between Davidic kings and those of other royal houses throughout much the book of Kings; that makes the Judean dynasty unshakeable even while the dynasties of the northern kingdom are like 'reeds swaying in the water' (1 Ki. 14:15). The dynasty survives *in spite of* the disobedience of David's successors. At other times in Kings, however, the continuance of the dynasty is seemingly made *dependent upon* the obedience of David's successors (1 Ki. 2:4; 8:25; 9:4-5). The promise is treated as conditional, rather than unconditional. There is thus a tension between law and grace where David's dynasty is concerned, a tension which is never fully resolved. A similar tension is apparent when we turn to the other great promise which is referred to in the book, the promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob of descendants and everlasting possession of the land of Canaan. This is a promise, too, which influences God's treatment of his people in the story (2 Ki. 13:23, and implicitly in 1 Ki. 4:20-21, 24; 18:36); and it is a promise which lies in the background of Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 8:22-53, as he looks forward to the possibility of forgiveness after judgment. Yet it is a promise which seemingly finds itself in conflict with the facts as the book of Kings closes, when disobedience has led to expulsion from the land and exile in a foreign empire.

Keeping these tensions in mind, let us now turn to the movement of the narrative in 2 Kings. Throughout the initial stages of this second section of the book, the reader still awaits the judgment which Elijah has prophesied will fall upon Ahab's house (1 Ki. 21:17-29)—judgment unexpectedly delayed, in the first instance, by Ahab's own repentance when confronted by its announcement. The delay is sufficiently long to allow the kingdom of Judah to be drawn into Israel's sins. After two relatively righteous kings (Asa, Jehoshaphat), we discover in 2 Kings 8:16-29 that Judah has found herself with two kings who share with Ahab's children both their names (Jehoram, Ahaziah) and their penchant for idolatry. The disease in Ahab's household has proved infectious, carried south by his daughter (2 Ki. 8:18). Intermarriage has again wreaked its havoc (*cf.* 1 Ki. 11:1 ff.; 16:31-33). Yet God has promised David a 'lamp' (2 Ki. 8:19). Here we find the reappearance of the motif mentioned above which has already been seen twice in 1 Kings (11:36; 15:4), the reappearance of the promise which makes the ultimate difference between Davidic kings and others.

It is certainly this promise which makes the difference in 2 Kings 9-11. When we are told about the Judean Ahaziah in 2 Kings 8:25-29, it seems at first that the promise is under threat. Although we anticipate that it will hold good for Jehoram's son as well as for his father, we note that it is not explicitly repeated in 8:25-29; and it is somewhat disconcerting to read in verse 26 that Ahaziah added only one year of life to the twentytwo which had passed by the time he succeeded to the throne. Did he die without an heir, we ask? What of the Davidic line after him? It is particularly disconcerting when we read alongside this information, in verse 25, that he came to the throne in Jehoram of Israel's twelfth year; for we know from 2 Kings 3:1 that Jehoram only ruled for twelve years. We are in the last moments of the house of Ahab; and it seems that the house of David, mixed up through marriage with this other, most wicked of royal houses, is to be caught up in the judgment. When we then read in 2 Kings 11:1 that after Ahaziah's death Athaliah the queen-mother 'proceeded to destroy the whole royal house', it seems that the end has indeed come. Yet this is not quite so. One royal prince remains to carry on the line (11:2); and against all the odds, he survives six years of his grandmother's 'foreign' rule to emerge once again as king in a land purified of the worship of foreign gods (11:3-20).

The significance of this for our reading of the end of the book of Kings becomes apparent once we have grasped how it is that Hebrew narrative in general works and how it is that the Ahab story in particular provides the framework within which 2 Kings 21-23 must be read. At the level of generality, one of the things that is striking about biblical storytelling is its use of narrative patterning. The biblical story is quite self-consciously told in such a way that events and characters in the later chapters recall events and characters in the earlier chapters, by way of comparison or contrast. We are thus invited to read the various chapters of the story together in order to gain a fuller understanding of what is being said overall. Within the book of Kings itself, for example, the kings of Judah are everywhere compared and contrasted with David (*e.g.*, 1 Ki. 15:3, 11), while Jeroboam is painted in the colours, first of Moses, and then of Aaron (1 Ki. 12).[10] What is interesting in regard to 2 Kings 21-23 in particular is that the characters of both Manasseh and Josiah are drawn there so as to

[10]For the detail of the argument here, and indeed for the exegesis *in extenso* which undergirds the whole argument of this essay, *cf.* I.W. Provan, *1 and 2 Kings* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995).

remind us, each in his own way, of Ahab. Manasseh imitates Ahab by building altars to Baal (2 Ki. 21:3; *cf.* also the Asherah pole in 1 Ki. 16:33) and by worshipping idols (2 Ki. 21:11; *cf.* 1 Ki. 21:26). The judgment that will fall on Jerusalem because of Manasseh's sins is to be analogous to what happened to the house of Ahab (2 Ki. 21:13). That was judgment, of course, which completely destroyed the royal house (1 Ki. 21:21-22; 2 Ki. 9-10; *cf.* 1 Ki. 14:10 and 21:21 for the only occurrences prior to 2 Ki. 21:12 of 'I am going to bring… disaster'). It seems from this that the Davidic line is to end after all, divine promises notwithstanding. It seems that there will be no escape, on this occasion, like the narrow escape of 2 Kings 11:1 ff.—that this time, identification with Ahab will lead the house of David to Ahab's fate. What is said about the righteous Josiah does nothing to dispel this impression. Huldah's words to him in 2 Kings 22:15-20 simply confirm what we already know from the unnamed prophets of 2 Kings 21. It is true that because Josiah has humbled himself before the LORD (v. 19), he will not personally see all the disaster that is to fall on Jerusalem. There is to be a delay of the kind that we saw with Ahab, whose house was also spared for a while because he tore his clothes and 'humbled himself' (1 Ki. 21:27-28). Manasseh's grandson, in other words, is now being treated, as his grandfather was, like Ahab. Josiah's reaction makes a difference—but only to him. The judgment which has been announced will still surely fall, as it fell on the house of the apostate predecessor.

These parallels drawn between the house of David and the house of Ahab in 2 Kings 21-23 clearly imply that the destruction of David's house will be total. There will be no escape of the kind which occurred in Athaliah's day. The full significance of the mere mention of Jehoiachin and his family in the closing chapters of Kings now becomes apparent. He reappears in the narrative, in fact, in a manner strikingly reminiscent of the appearance of Joash after that earlier destruction of the 'whole royal family'. He survives like Joash, unexpectedly, in the midst of carnage; and he represents, like Joash during Athaliah's reign, the potential for the continuation of the Davidic line at a later time, when foreign rule has been removed. All is not yet necessarily lost, after all; the destruction of the family of the 'last king of Judah' (Zedekiah) does not mean that there is no Davidide left. As the prayer of Solomon in 1 Kings 8:22-53 looks beyond the disaster of exile, grounding its hope for the restoration of Israel to her land in God's gracious and unconditional election of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (*cf.* also 1 Ki. 17:36-37; 2 Ki. 13:23; 14:27); as it refuses to accept

that God's words about the rejection of people, city and temple (*e.g.*, 2 Ki. 21:14; 23:27) are his final words; so too 2 Kings 25:27-30 in its narrative context hints that the unconditional aspects of the Davidic promise may even still, after awful judgment has fallen, remain in force. They express the hope that grace may, in the end, triumph over law; the hope that, God's wrath having been poured out upon good Josiah's sons, his (admittedly wicked) grandson might still produce a further 'lamp for Jerusalem', as his (equally wicked) forefathers did (1 Ki. 11:36; 15:4; 2 Ki. 8:19). These closing verses of the book thus hang on tenaciously, in difficult circumstances, to the words of 2 Samuel 7:15-16: 'my love will never be taken away from him… your throne shall be established forever.'

Can such a hope reasonably be described as 'messianic'? It is certainly a hope focused on the unforeseen future, a time which is not this time. There is no sense in the book of Kings that the king of the future is anything other than a distant prospect. It is equally clear that the king who is sought is an ideal king. The book of Kings always measures its monarchs in terms of the ideal, finding almost all of them wanting in serious respects. The two least criticised, Hezekiah and Josiah, together with the early Solomon (criticised, but nevertheless blessed by God to an unparalleled extent) are themselves interesting, to the extent that they may be taken as indicating the shape of the ideal towards which the authors of Kings were looking. A full answer to our question requires a closer look in the first instance at the way in which the reigns of these kings are described.

III. Solomon, Hezekiah and Josiah in Kings

The early Solomon, we are told, inspired by the wisdom which comes from above (1 Ki. 3), rules over a well-ordered, happy and prosperous kingdom (1 Ki. 4:1-20). Even though the people are as numerous as the sand on the seashore (a fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise in Gn. 22:17), his wisdom is of equal measure (1 Ki. 4:29). He is fitted for the task. Here is government by the righteous person whose prospering is allied to the people's rejoicing (Pr. 29:2), rather than government by the wicked person who makes the people groan (Pr. 29:2; *cf.* 1 Sa. 8:10-18). Solomon's reign extends, indeed, over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt (4:21, 24)—a large area, corresponding to the ideal extent of Israel's dominion as promised to Abraham in Genesis 15:18, and apparently

corresponding also to a very great extent to the area of David's dominion as we may deduce it from texts such as 2 Samuel 8:1-14 and 2 Samuel 10. The countries in this region, we are told, brought tribute and were Solomon's subjects all his life; and so it is that an enormous quantity of food flows into the kingdom from outside, with the result that all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived each man under his own vine and fig tree. That is to say, they lived under God's blessing (Joel 2:22; Mi. 4:4; contrast Ps. 105:33; Je. 5:17), having a degree of economic independence (*cf.* 2 Ki. 18:31 for an explicit threat to such independence). This fits in very much with the thrust of 1 Kings 4:7-20 (that Solomon's economic arrangements were not oppressive, and that his subjects were happy and prosperous under his rule); and, indeed, it gives us the broader context in which to comprehend these verses. It is at least partly because of the flow of goods into Israel from outside that the system of districts described in 1 Kings 4:7-19 does not create economic difficulties for the people (v. 20). If this is indeed the line of argument here, then it is no surprise that, having described the broader economic picture, the authors should then return in vv. 27-28 to the local position. It is because of Solomon's international position that the district officers are able to do their job in the way they do. The picture painted here is, then, a glorious one. It is very much the picture which the book of Micah paints of the kingdom of the 'last days', in which swords are beaten into ploughshares; in which every man will sit under his own vine and fig-tree, with no one to make them afraid; in which the nations come in pilgrimage to Zion (Mi. 4:1-5). The gathering around Solomon's table which is described in 1 Kings 4 in essence represents a kind of proto-messianic banquet, with Solomon presiding as the ideal king.

Hezekiah appears in the narrative of Kings in a context where the long-term absence of a king who is truly 'like David' has raised questions about Judah's future. She has most recently known a thoroughly bad king, unlike David in every respect (Ahaz, 2 Ki. 16:2); and the account of that king's reign, together with the account of Israel's exile in 2 Kings 17, implies that Judah may also be heading for exile—unless she heeds the prophetic warnings she has received and turns away from her sins. It is at this point that we are presented with a king who resembles David more closely than any Davidic king so far—the second David, who does what is right 'in accordance with everything David did' (2 Ki. 18:3). His religious faithfulness is impressive. Coming at the end of the long line of kings during whose reigns the high places 'were not removed' (1 Ki. 15:14; 22:43; 2 Ki. 12:3; 14:4; 15:4, 35), Heze-

kiah at last addresses this issue (2 Ki. 18:4), reforming Judean worship and making it what it should be. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, we are told, in the way in which he trusted in the LORD (v. 5). This is evidenced in the way that he held fast (דבק) to God throughout his life, keeping the law of Moses, in contrast to Solomon, who in his old age 'held fast' to foreign wives (דבק, 1 Ki. 11:2; *cf.* also Jehoram in 2 Ki. 3:3) and broke this law. The consequence of Hezekiah's religious faithfulness was that his military exploits paralleled David's in a way that was not true of any of the rest of his descendants, including Solomon. Only of David and Hezekiah among the Davidic kings is it said that 'the LORD was with him' (v. 7; *cf.* 1 Sa. 16:18; 18:12, 14; 2 Sa. 5:10) and that the king was successful in war (שׂכל, v. 7; *cf.* 1 Sa. 18:5, 14, 15). Only David and Hezekiah, furthermore, are said to have defeated the Philistines (נכה, v. 8; *cf.* 1 Sa. 18:27; 19:8; *etc.*). As similar to David as he was, he was by the same token utterly dissimilar to Ahaz; for he would not continue to serve the king of Assyria (עבד; contrast Ahaz's description of himself as 'servant' of the king of Assyria in 2 Ki. 16:7), but rebelled against him. Foreign influence or domination, of whatever kind, was rejected.

This in turn leads on to the Assyrian invasion of Judah (2 Ki. 18:13-19:37), where the matter of Hezekiah's 'trust' is the central issue (*cf.* the use of בטח in 18:5 and in 18:19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 30). Are the Judeans wise to trust in the unseen LORD, when the all too visible Assyrian army stands at Jerusalem's gates with overwhelmingly superior numbers in its favour? The Assyrian commander suggests not, holding out the prospect that surrender will lead the people only into Solomonic bliss (v. 31) and later into a new 'promised land' like their own (v. 32; *cf.* Dt. 8:7-9). He presents the God of Israel as simply one of many powerless gods (the argument of vv. 33-35), and offers the king of Assyria in his place as the true provider of material blessings and of life itself. This blasphemy is compounded in 19:10-13, where the argument is subtly different. In 18:28 ff. it is Hezekiah who is deceiving the people about what will happen if they trust the LORD. In 19:10 ff. it is Hezekiah who is himself deceived by the God in whom he trusts. This is a god, avers Sennacherib, who is not only weak, but duplicitous; and like the deities of all the other conquered lands, he is a god who will be destroyed. The word of the 'great king' (18:19, 28) thus uttered is met in turn by the word of the LORD through the prophet Isaiah in response, first, to Hezekiah's messengers (19:2-4), and then to his memorable prayer (19:14-19), which affirms his belief that the LORD is God alone, creator of heaven and earth and God over

all the kingdoms of the earth. Sennacherib's blasphemy and pride will lead to his downfall (19:5-7, 20-34). Although he imagines that what he has accomplished in his military campaigns has been achieved in his own strength,[11] in reality the LORD ordained and planned it all. Assyria was merely the rod of his anger. Now the judgment of the all-knowing God will come upon Assyria instead; and Sennacherib will be forced to abandon his campaign before an arrow is fired, a shield raised, a siege ramp built against Jerusalem's walls. The LORD will protect Jerusalem completely, saving the city for the sake of his own reputation and for the sake of David his servant. The 'great army' outside Jerusalem's gates is duly decimated by the angel of the LORD; and Sennacherib returns to Nineveh to his death. 'David' has once more slain 'Goliath'. The ideal king is one who, in trusting God and keeping his Law, puts to flight all God's enemies.

Josiah is the best king of all in Kings, a second Moses to match the second David—the ideal king who does not turn from the law to the right or to the left, according to the stipulations of Deuteronomy 17:20 (*cf.* 2 Ki. 22:2). This is only the first of several references in 2 Kings 22-23 which link Josiah with the law of Moses in general and with the figure of Moses in particular. His religious reforms are themselves based, of course, on the 'Book of the Law' which is found in 2 Kings 22 and which is clearly meant to be thought of as the book of Deuteronomy, since the phrase 'Book of the Law' is only used in the Pentateuch of Deuteronomy (Dt. 28:61; 29:21; 30:10; 31:26; *cf.* also Jos. 1:8; 8:30-35; 23:6; 24:26). His actions against the Bethel cult which is focused on Jeroboam's calves (2 Ki. 23:15-20; *cf.* 1 Ki. 12-13) equally clearly recalls Moses's own action against the first golden calf, as he burns the high place (along with the Asherah pole) and grinds it to powder (*cf.* שׂרף, 'to burn', and דקק לעפר, 'to grind to powder', in v. 15, noting also v. 6, and Dt. 9:21). After purification of worship comes the command to celebrate the Passover, according to the stipulations of Deuteronomy (Dt. 16:1-8, noting esp. v. 6). In celebrating this festival Josiah not only outstrips Hezekiah in faithfulness to God, the authors tell us, but even David himself; for a Passover like this had not been

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[11]His pretensions to divinity are well expressed in 2 Ki. 19:23-24. He claims to have brought judgment—as only the LORD can do—upon the cedars of Lebanon (*cf.* Ps. 29:5; Is. 2:12-13; Am. 2:9; Zc. 11:1-3) and upon Egypt (Is. 19:1-15). He ascends the heights so that he can look God straight in the face (מָרוֹם 'height' in both v. 22 and v. 23; *cf.* Pss. 73:8; 75:4-5; Is. 14:13-15). It is he, and not the LORD, who brings or withholds fertility, creating springs and drying up rivers (Ps. 36:8-9; Je. 2:13; 17:13; 51:36; Ezk. 31; Ho. 13:15).

observed since before the days of the judges who led Israel (*cf.* Jos. 5:10-12 for the last mention of Passover in the narrative). Little wonder, then, that having reported the removal of mediums and spiritists (2 Ki. 21:6), household gods (lit. 'teraphim'; *cf.* Judg. 17:5; 18:14, 17), idols (2 Ki. 21:11, 21) and detestable things in general (1 Ki. 11:5, 7; 2 Ki. 23:13) from Judah and its capital, the authors should conclude their account of Josiah's reforms by telling us that there was simply no king like him when it came to 'turning to the LORD' (vv. 24-25). He did so, in fact, with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the law of Moses (*cf.* Dt. 6:5). Never had anyone turned to the LORD as Josiah did, in accordance with all the law. The ideal king is one who does precisely that.

If it is asked, then, what kind of ideal future king the authors of Kings had in mind, the descriptions of the reigns of Solomon, Hezekiah and Josiah in particular give us our clues. Here are the 'types' of the future king which anticipate him and sketch the outlines of his character and rule. Is this king a messianic figure? In terms of the book of Kings taken by itself, one might argue the point. Much depends upon just how firmly one is prepared to draw a distinction between a future hope which is allegedly this-worldly, national and political, on the one hand, and one which is allegedly truly eschatological, in that it concerns 'the final age' *per se*, on the other. Mowinckel, for example, distinguishes between an ideal of kingship which belongs to the present (though also looking towards the future) and an expectation of the Messiah as a purely future, eschatological figure. Before the ideal of kingship could become the expectation of a future Messiah, he maintains, it had to be separated from those possibilities which were associated with the next festival and the next king, yet never realized. The gulf between ideal and reality had to become considerable.[12] If this is one's understanding of Messiah, then one would have to admit that the book of Kings of itself is not overtly messianic. Yet whether one can in practice distinguish very easily between ideal king and Messiah along these lines must be open to question. How, precisely, does one tell the difference between a future-oriented, yet presently-grounded, ideal of kingship and a messianic kingship in a body of texts where the language of myth, with all its implications of ultimacy, is so readily applied to historical kings, and where the future is always described in terms of the past? Given this pronounced blurring of present and future, and the difficulty therefore

[12]Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 123, 157.

of telling which it is, precisely, that a particular text concerns, how 'overtly' messianic does a book like Kings have to be before it is considered 'truly' messianic? How 'considerable', indeed, must be the gulf between ideal and reality before we can speak of messianism? It is surely the case that the gulf was always thought of as considerable, at least by those who took the language of the ancient royal psalms seriously as referring to tangible reality. Psalm 72, for example, with its 'Of Solomon' heading, appears to be a thoroughly 'eschatological' psalm in terms of its expectations of the Davidic king. Ultimate justice, the crushing of oppressors, fertility and prosperity, universal and eternal rule, universal blessing—the language is just as extravagant as that of the prophets who looked into the distant future. How easily, then, can past, present and future be distinguished? When the book of Kings itself draws attention to the same gulf between ideal kingship and reality, acknowledging Solomon's many faults while acknowledging ideal elements in his reign which correspond to elements in Psalm 72, is it not then somewhat artificial to differentiate between ideal king and Messiah on the ground that the first is not truly an 'eschatological' figure?

IV. 1 and 2 Kings in Context

The impossibility of the distinction becomes even more apparent when one remembers that the book of Kings is not in any case intended to be read alone, but in its context; and in this context, the ideal king can hardly be read otherwise than as a messianic figure. The immediate context to which I refer is that of the other prophetic books which are linked with Kings, especially the book of Isaiah, a link which is formalized in the binding together of what are often now called 'narrative books' (Joshua-Kings) with what are still called 'prophetic books' in one single section of the Hebrew Old Testament entitled 'Prophets'. One only has to look at what has happened in these Latter Prophets to the figure of Hezekiah, and to a less obvious extent to Josiah, to see the point.[13] Isaiah 36-39 contains, of course, much of the material found in 2 Kings 18-20 (with additions), and it has been convincingly argued[14] that we must see these chapters as they appear in Isaiah as a counterpart to Isaiah 6:1-9:7 [6]. Here a critique of the

[13]I omit further consideration of Solomon in this essay for reasons of space; *cf.* further my commentary, cited above.

Davidic dynasty and the ruling king Ahaz (Is. 7) is followed by the promise of a Davidic child (9:1-7 [8:23-9:6]) in whom the promises to David will be realized. This child to whom such great expectations attach is most naturally taken to be Ahaz's son, Hezekiah (*cf.* Is. 11:1-10; 14:28-32); and in Isaiah 36-39 his reign is duly described, in a way which appears to heighten his piety in relation to both Kings and Chronicles (*cf.* the prayer of 38:9-20, which is not to be found in the other books; and the omission, as in Chronicles, of any mention of the paying of tribute to the Assyrians which is recorded in 2 Ki.18:13-16). The positioning of these chapters immediately before the oracles of glorious deliverance and restoration which begin in Isaiah 40, Isaiah's oracle about exile and Hezekiah's response (Is. 39:5-8) leading directly into 'Comfort, comfort my people' (Is. 40:1), is crucially important. Childs has noted the way in which, within the book of Isaiah, chapters 40-55 have become detached from any specific historical situation and have become fully eschatological, testifying to Israel's future with God.[15] In this context, he argues, Isaiah 36-39 have assumed the metaphorical role of commentary on the death and rebirth of the nation. We may go still further than this, however, and note the way in which the figure of Hezekiah himself is drawn into this vision of the nation's future by the structuring of the book which makes his reign so central. Isaiah 6:1-9:6 (with the other associated passages mentioned above) imply that Hezekiah is the 'second David' who is completely to fulfil God's promises: it is in his lifetime that the anticipated era of universal peace and security will be ushered in. Isaiah 36-39 also make this link between Hezekiah and God's promises. It is not just that the activity of Isaiah in the period of Hezekiah is being presented as the historic occasion for the giving of the words of consolation in Isaiah 40-55.[16] The impression is rather given by the immediate juxtaposition of Isaiah 39:8 ('There will be peace and security in my lifetime') with the beginning of these words of consolation (and indeed the absence of any note of Hezekiah's death and burial, such as is found in this position in Kings) that the promises will indeed come to pass, in some sense, in 'Hezekiah's' reign. In other words, it seems that the figure of Hezekiah has himself become detached from any historical moorings, and has become within the literary context of the book of Isaiah just as

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[14]P.R. Ackroyd, *Studies in the Religious Tradition of the Old Testament* (London: SCM, 1987), 105-20, building on the work of R.F. Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976).
[15]Childs, *Introduction*, 325-38.
[16]So Ackroyd, *Studies*, 105-20.

fully eschatological as Isaiah 40-55. Isaiah 8:23-9:7 [6] also encourages this theological move, of course, because of their portrayal of the future king as one possessing divine attributes, ushering in the reign of God.

The total effect of all these texts within the context of the book of Isaiah as a whole is thus to identify Hezekiah as a paradigmatic king in whose reign the promises were in fact as yet unfulfilled, and who thus points beyond himself to another Davidic monarch to come. This sort of move from present to future is seen equally clearly in the book of Jeremiah in relation to Josiah, who becomes the model (22:15-16) for the Davidic king of the future who will rule over Israel and Judah in righteousness (23:1-8)—an antitype of the wicked Jehoiakim, who burns scrolls rather than obeying their words (Je. 36; contrast 2 Ki. 22:11 ff.).[17] The description in Zechariah 12:10-14:2 of the shepherd who is 'pierced', and the fall of Jerusalem and the exile which follow this, is also clearly reminiscent of the later events of Josiah's reign (*cf.* 'Megiddo' in 2 Ki. 23:29 and Zc. 12:11; and the description of Josiah's death in 2 Ch. 35:23-24). The suggestion of vicarious suffering in Zechariah 13:1 reminds us, indeed, of Isaiah 52:13-53:12; and some have wondered whether this passage, too, does not also reflect those events.[18] When Kings is read in the context of prophetic writings like these and like Haggai 2:20-23, where Jehoiachin's grandson Zerubbabel becomes the explicit focus of messianic hope, it matters little whether the hope in Kings is overtly messianic of itself or not. As a prophetic text among other prophetic texts, it lends itself naturally to such a reading. The addition to the canon of books like the Psalter, where the royal psalms provide an important structuring element in the eschatological shaping of the book;[19] or of Chronicles, where Hezekiah is portrayed as the first king since the division of the united

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[17]*Cf.* also Je. 30:1-11, which looks forward more generally to a time when a descendant of David will once again sit on the throne of a united kingdom of Israel (*cf.* 1 Ki. 11:39).

[18]On Josiah *cf.* further A. Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus: The Historical Josiah and the Messianic Expectations of Exilic and Postexilic Times* (CBOT 33; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992); *idem, The Servant of YHWH and Cyrus: A Reinterpretation of the Exilic Messianic Programme in Isaiah 40-55* (CBOT 35; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992).

[19]On the structuring *cf.* G.H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985); the various articles in *Interpretation* 46 (1992) 117-55; and J.C. McCann (ed.), *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (JSOTS 159; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993). In general, however, insufficient attention has been paid to the way in which this shaping is bound up with messianic expectation.

kingdom to reunite all Israel under one king and around one temple since the time of David and Solomon, a kingly model for the future and a focus of expectation in relation to the time when God would reestablish his kingdom[20]—such additions serve only to broaden the scope of a messianic hope which is already there.

It is therefore not surprising that, although Hezekiah and Josiah do not appear by name in the New Testament except in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:1-17 (*cf.* vv. 10-11), we should hear so many echoes of the Old Testament narratives about their reigns when we read the New Testament.[21] For Jesus' reflection upon his own identity, as well as the thinking of the early Christians about the one they regarded as the Root and Offspring of David (Rev. 22:16), was bound to be influenced—as the thinking of the Jewish rabbis about the Messiah in the early centuries AD was clearly influenced (*cf.*, for example, *Sanh.* 94; 98b; 99a; *Ber.* 28b)—by the reading of these narratives in their canonical context. Thus it is that we find, for example, in Jesus' attitude to the ritually 'unclean' and in his healing of people after assuring them of divine forgiveness (Mk. 2:1-12; 7:1-23), echoes of Hezekiah's attitude to the 'unclean' Israelites during his Passover celebration in 2 Chronicles 30:18-20. Jesus cleanses the temple, like both Hezekiah and Josiah (Mt. 21:12-13 and parallels; Jn. 2:13-17), looking for a truly reformed religion. He himself is one who, like Josiah, keeps the whole law of Moses and actively promotes its keeping (*e.g.*, Mt. 5:17-20; 8:4). There is to be no lasting reform, however, and no immediate deliverance for Jerusalem from her foreign oppressor (Rome). Jesus does not function as a Hezekiah in this respect—at least, not at this time. The city will fall again; the temple will know desecration of Manasseh-like proportions; and there will once more be exile (*e.g.*, Mt. 23:37-24:21). Jesus' own fate in the midst of all this judgment is to die, like righteous Josiah (*cf.* Jn. 19:37), a suffering servant to his people. It is, however, also to be 'restored to health' after three days (like Hezekiah; *cf. Ber.* 10b for the rabbinic view that Hezekiah's recovery was a near-resurrection from the dead, comparable to Elisha's miracle in 2 Ki. 4:18-37). There will be a second

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[20]Hezekiah's significance as a paradigmatic king is, in fact, greater in Chronicles than in Kings, not least because of the Chronicler's direct equation of kingship in Israel with the kingdom of God and the much more explicitly hopeful note upon which 2 Chronicles ends. We may note here the significance of the fact that the Chronicler in 1 Ch. 3:17-24 extends the Davidic line precisely in terms of a list of Jehoiachin's descendants, carrying still further the 'logic' of 2 Ki. 25:27-30.
[21]*Cf.* D. Daube, *He That Cometh* (London, 1966).

coming, when Jerusalem and her remnant will once again know salvation. Victory, rather than defeat, will be experienced at Megiddo (=Armageddon, Rev. 16:16), as the nations are defeated and Babylon is brought low by the Davidic King (Rev. 16-19). The kingdom of God will have fully arrived. The Lamb will sit forever upon his throne (Rev. 21-22). Biblically speaking, this is the king towards whom all the other agents of God's kingship in the world point, actualizing and anticipating the rule of God which is ultimately to be ushered in completely by the LORD's Anointed.

CHAPTER 5

MESSIANISM AND MESSIANIC PROPHECY IN ISAIAH 1-12 AND 28-33

Daniel Schibler

Summary

Messianism and messianic prophecy are not the same. The Book of Isaiah illustrates this well. Early prophetic messianism as found in Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33 is an expression of hope or expectancy with regard to a Jerusalemite king on the part of a particular group of his people (often called the 'remnant'), headed mostly by a prophet. Whenever the king and the remnant practised justice and righteousness as David did (2 Sa. 8:15) and as required by the prophet, messianism arose. It developed until that hope was foiled by the failure of the given king and the remnant to observe justice and righteousness); generally the hope was transferred to the next descendant of the throne.

Certain texts, however have for centuries been taken for more than that. In Isaiah these are Isaiah 7:10-17, 9:1-6 and 11:1-9. While they are part and parcel of messianism, they contain details which for a number of New Testament writers and uncounted believers since pointed in varying degrees to Jesus of Nazareth, as the Messiah par excellence.

I. Introductory

'It's all about Jesus!' my first Bible teacher used to say, a little over 25 years ago. 'The Bible is all about Jesus.' I did not know whether he was simply restating Luther's famous hermeneutical principle 'Was Christum treibet' (how does it relate to Christ?) or whether he actually read of Jesus in the Old Testament. At any rate, as a fledgling student of the Bible, I often wondered where Jesus was in the Old Testament. I trust the following study of Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33[1] will help to illuminate one aspect of this question.

The term 'messianism' comes from the word 'Messiah', which has been and remains to this day a rather loaded notion.[2] It is used in the Old Testament to refer to a deliverer from trouble, but is nowadays used for just about any professed or accepted champion of a hope or good cause.[3] The word 'Messiah' is derived from the Hebrew root משח, 'to anoint', mostly used in connection of anointing a person for an office; though other uses do occur (*e.g.*, at Je. 22:14 it is used of applying varnish to wood).[4] The noun מָשִׁיחַ 'anointed one', 'Messiah', occurs fairly frequently in certain books of the Hebrew Bible (above all 1 and 2 Sa. and Pss.), rarely or never in others (especially the Prophets). As to the people to be anointed, the reference is mostly to kings.[5] Thus, the term 'Messiah' and kingship are closely related.[6]

In our view the word 'messianism' has much more to it than just an etymological link with the Hebrew root משח. While the term 'Messiah' has traditionally always denoted a particular person, a deliverer from trouble, above all Jesus of Nazareth for the Christian

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[1]Only these chapters in Is. 1-39 contain messianism and messianic prophecies as defined below. C. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny: The Development of the Book of Isaiah, A Reassessment of Isaiah 36-39* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 61, speculates that even Is. 36-37 is of a piece with Is. 8:23-9:6; 11:1-10 and 32:1-8 and not, as often purported, a secondary embellishment of post-exilic times.

[2]Recent studies of the subject, from both the conservative and the critical sides of the spectrum, are: G. van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990); J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Messiah* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992); P.D. Wegner, *An Examination of Kingship and Messianic Expectation in Isaiah 1-35* (Lewiston: Mellen, 1992); E. Stegemann (ed.), *Messias-Vorstellungen bei Juden und Christen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1993); *cf.* also H. Strauß, 'Messias/ Messianische Bewegungen I', *TRE* XXII (1992), 617-21 and M. de Jonge, 'Messiah', *ABD* IV (1992), 777ff. In our view, Charlesworth's compendium is the most illuminating.

[3]Sadly, it has come to be used today as a term to describe a religious guru more often than anyone else; *e.g.*, for David Koresh (April 1992, in Texas) and for Shoko Asahara, leader of Aum Shinrikyo (March 1995, in Tokyo).

tradition, the term 'messianism' goes far beyond what the root משׁח denotes. One scholar has even spoken of 'messianism without Messiah'.[7] Thus, while Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33 do not contain the root משׁח, we think it correct to speak of a 'prophetic messianism' in these chapters.

Our working definition of messianism as it relates to Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33 is as an expression of hope or expectancy with regard to a Jerusalemite king on the part of a particular group of his people (often described as 'the remnant'), headed mostly by a prophet. This hope relates particularly to the practice of מִשְׁפָּט ('justice') and צְדָקָה (righteousness): whenever, according to the demand of the prophet, the king and the remnant practice justice and righteousness,[8] as David is said to have done (2 Sa. 8:15), we may speak of the fulfilment of a messianic hope; similarly, the hope can be thwarted by the misbehaviour of the king and his people, a failure to practice justice and righteousness. Generally, the hope is then transferred to the next royal descendant.[9]

Bearing this definition in mind, let us begin by examining what Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33 have to say about kings.

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[4]A look at the references that contain the root משׁח ('anoint', mostly the verb, in Qal about 70 times, substantive מָשִׁיחַ 38 times) leads one to the conclusion that הַמָּשִׁיחַ, with the article, '*the* Messiah' became with time a *terminus technicus* for the king, starting with Saul (1 Sa. 12:3; *cf.* however Jotham's fable, Judg. 9:8) and ending with Cyrus (Is. 45:1). The only exception is Lv. 4:3 where הַמָּשִׁיחַ is the priest. In 1 Ki. 19:16, a text often cited to point out the anointing of prophets (*cf.* Is. 61:1; Ps. 105:15), the prophet Elijah is only told to anoint his successor Elisha (alongside Jehu, the king), but actually casts his mantle upon him, nothing more (1 Ki. 19:19-21). The 'shield of Saul not anointed with oil' in 2 Sa. 1:21 (*cf.* Is. 21:5) probably serves as a metonymy for his kingdom. Interestingly enough, with the exception of Lv. 4:3 and 2 Sa. 1:21, the LXX translates מָשִׁיחַ and הַמָּשִׁיחַ always with χρίστος, 'Christ'.

[5]While only Lv. 4:3 calls the priest הַמָּשִׁיחַ '*the* Messiah', priests, above all Aaron and his sons, are quite often said to be anointed (Ex. 28:41; 29:7; 30:30; 40:13,15; Lv. 6:15; 7:36; 8:12; 16:32; Nu. 3:3; 35:25; 1 Ch. 29:22).

[6]R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1965) 103f.

[7]de Jonge, *ABD* IV, 778.

[8]The two nouns appear 8 times together in Is. 1-39, *ABD* V:728f. *Cf.* H. Cazelles, 'De l'idéologie royale' in *JANES* 5 (1973; Fs. T.H. Gaster) 59-73, esp. 71.

[9]For an additional element of messianism that we hesitated to include, *cf.*, below, fn. 50. Wegner, *Kingship*, 3f pleads for a more restricted definition: 'The hope which is engendered by the belief in the future deliverer/ruler who will set up an everlasting kingdom and bring salvation to the people of God.' Definitions are legion; Cazelles, *Le Messie de la Bible: Christologie de l'Ancien Testament* (Paris: Desclée, 1978), 217ff has summarized no fewer than 26.

II. Kingship in Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33

Perhaps to our surprise, Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33 do not make frequent mention of kings. Other officials and dignitaries are mentioned much more often.[10] All of them are scolded by the prophet, mostly for social evils and moral decadence, but, interestingly, never the king.[11] When we discover in 3:6-7, for instance, that a number of officials are named because of their failure to provide leadership in the land, naturally we are led to ask: Where is the king? Again, YHWH himself removes the leadership, 'warrior and soldier, judge and prophet, diviner and elder, captain of fifty and dignitary, counsellor and skilful magician and expert enchanter' (3:1-3), but, strangely, not the king.[12] When the 'daughters of Zion' (3:16), probably the wives of those in charge (3:25), are accused of living in too much opulence, symbolized by the multitude of their luxurious ornaments (3:18-23, a description in prose) again we wonder: Why is there no queen among the accused? Would she not be a prime target of the prophet's critique?

Coming to Isaiah 6, the next text which mentions a king, one asks: Is YHWH alone considered to be king (6:5)? Where is the earthly king in all this exaltation of YHWH? After all, it is dated in the year of king Uzziah's death (6:1). Is it precisely because of this that the prophet's eyes are turned to the heavenly king exclusively, at least for the time being? Finally, when a king *is* mentioned by name, Ahaz, son of Uzziah (7:1ff, again in prose), no accusation is levelled against him

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[10]1:10, 'rulers of Sodom', 1:23, 'rebel rulers' (*cf.* 1:31, 'the mighty one'). 3:2-3 contains a whole gamut of dignitaries: 'hero, prophet, judge, elder' (*cf.* 3:14; 9:14) *etc.*. The 'garland' or 'crown of the drunkards of Ephraim' (28:1) denotes the pride and revelry of the leaders of Samaria, but no king is singled out, whereas priest and prophet alike are (28:7). The 'scoffers' and 'rulers of his people' (28:14), the ones 'who hide a plan too deep for the Lord' (29:15), the 'rebellious children' (30:1; *cf.* 1:4) or 'lying sons' (30:9) who descend into Egypt (30:2; 31:1) may, but do not necessarily include the king. But, we ask: why is he never mentioned, except in Is. 30:33 where 'the king' must be the king of Assyria (*cf.* 36:14 and Wildberger, 1223)?

[11]The same is the case with Isaiah's contemporary or 'country cousin', the prophet Micah. Rarely does he mention the king (*e.g.*, Mi. 1:14), let alone scold him, but he does not hesitate to rebuke the officials one after the other, including prophets and priests (3:1, 5, 9, 11; 7:2-3).

[12]No wonder most commentators are at a loss concerning its historical context; *cf.* H. Wildberger, *Jesaja 28-39* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1972) 120; J.N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah 1-39* (Grand Rapid: Eerdmans, 1986) 133; A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Leicester: IVP, 1994) 60. B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja* (4th ed; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1922) 44, thinks of 'weak' Ahaz; Delitzsch, 132, suggests that the omission is intentional since he had sunk into the mere shadow of a king.

personally, with the exception, perhaps of a rather lenient reminder in 7:9 that he had to trust [God], but the imperative is in the plural, addressed to the 'house of David' (7:13). The only other kings mentioned in Isaiah 1-12 are kings from the North. Peqah of Israel is referred to in 7:4, 9 (rather disparagingly: he is a [mere] 'son of Remaliah', *i.e.*, probably a [Canaanite?] usurper, *cf.* 2 Ki. 15:25). Then in 8:21, the next text referring to a king, the reference to the 'hungry roamer' who is cursing 'his [unnamed] king and his god', actually says little against the king himself. It is against the darkness and distress of the situation in general, in all probability the Assyrian invasion in 734-732 BC (see below), that he is railing (8:22). In Isaiah 10:5-11, it is 'the Assyrian' (10:5) who issues the threatening words 'Are not all my commanders kings?' (Is. 10:8). This is obviously a rhetorical question, expressing contempt for all aspirations of Assyria's subjects to rebel by usurping the throne again and claiming independence. In Isaiah 28-33, the king is rarely mentioned and when he is, it is mostly in a positive manner (32:1; 33:17, 22).[13]

In the light of this preliminary survey of Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33, it might seem that too little is said about the king to allow one to speak of messianism in any substantial form. However, according to our definition, messianism is not only an expression of hope or expectancy with regard to a king, but is linked to the establishment of justice and righteousness, as proclaimed by the prophet. We now examine other aspects of Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33, in particular the oracles of hope which speak of מִשְׁפָּט and צְדָקָה.

III. Oracles of hope in Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33

Most commentators agree that Isaiah 1-12 forms the first major part of the whole book,[14] though there is much less agreement as to the number of its constituent parts, their authorship and date.[15] Many view Isaiah 1 as an introduction to the whole book, because of the number of themes it contains that are found in subsequent parts of the

[13]As to the question whether Hezekiah, most probably the king of Is. 28-33 was seeking help from Egypt (Is. 30 and 31), an idea commonly held, see Seitz's well-argued refutation, *Zion's Final Destiny*, 75ff. He lays bare an obvious and current reductionism with regard to Is. 36-37.

[14]*TRE* 16:638 (O. Kaiser, 1987); *ABD* III: 480 (C. Seitz, 1992); Motyer, among others, subdivides into 1-5 and 6-12. Is. 28-31 at least, less so Is. 32-33, are most often associated with Is. 1-12 as belonging roughly to the same time.

[15]The best discussion to date is C. Seitz in *ABD*, III, 479ff

book. Others question whether it is an introduction as such, because there are other later and no less important themes that are absent from Isaiah 1.[16] In our view Isaiah 1 contains enough of these later themes, at least *in nuce*, to suggest that it was indeed composed with the aim of giving a bird's eye view of the whole book.

The first large section within Isaiah 1-12 is chapters 2-5, usually subdivided into, on the one hand, 2:1-4 (5) and 2:6-4:1 and, on the other, 4:2-6 and 5:1-30. This section demonstrates the characteristic pattern of Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33, long oracles of doom interspersed with short oracles of hope. This pattern (AB or ABA) can be seen from Isaiah 1 on: 1:2-25 (doom); 1:26-27 (hope); 1:28-31 (doom); 2:1-4 (hope); 2:5-4:1 (doom); 4:2-6 (hope); 5:1-30 (doom), *etc.*

Isaiah 6:1-9:7 [Heb. 9:6] is, with few exceptions, considered to be a literary unity, often called a 'memorial' (*Denkschrift*) of the so-called Syro-Ephraimite war (734-732 BC), now more appropriately termed the 'Syro-Ephraimite debacle' (Seitz[17]) as it never came to a war. Unlike Isaiah 1-5, it contains a number of historical markers and it is there that we find the first texts that have traditionally been taken to be 'messianic prophecies', including the classic texts 7:14 and 9:6-7 [Heb. vv. 5-6]. We shall return to them later.

Isaiah 9:7 [Heb. v. 6]-10:34 is often linked to 5:1-30 and to chapters 28-31, mostly because of the similarity of the 'woe-oracles' found therein. There are no oracles of hope in this section and hence there is no messianism either.[18]

Isaiah 11 and 12 stand in a category by themselves, Isaiah 11 often being considered a composite oracle of hope, subdivided into 11:1-9 and 11:10-16, and Isaiah 12 a psalm put there at some indefinable time to round off the first major section of the whole book.

Finally, Isaiah 28-33 reverts to the (AB or ABA) pattern found in 1-12, long oracles of doom interspersed with short(er) oracles of hope: 28:1-4 (doom); 28:5-6 (hope); 28:7-15 (doom); 28:16-17 (hope); 28:18-29 (doom); 29:1-16 (doom); 29:17-24 (hope); 30:1-17 (doom), 30:18-24 (hope); 30:25-31:3 (doom); 31:4-32:8 (hope); 32:9-15 (doom);

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[16] M.A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-4 and the Postexilic Understanding of the Isaianic Tradition* (BZAW 171; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988) 186; W.J. Dumbrell, *The Search for Order: Biblical Eschatology in Focus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994) 80; H.G.M. Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah* (Oxford: OUP, 1994) 154, fn. 83; for Wildberger, *Jesaja 1-12*, 1554 who calls Is. 1 Isaiah's own 'Vermächtnis' (testament), there is no 'messianic hope' in ch.1.

[17] *ABD* III:480.

[18] *Cf.* Motyer, *Prophecy*, 112; Williamson, *Book Called Isaiah*, 132ff.

32:16-20 (hope); 33:1-16 (doom); 33:17-24 (hope).

Whatever the constituent parts of Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33 and their respective origins may be, an issue on which scholars will probably never agree entirely, when it comes to messianism, it is, in our view, futile to seek to determine how and when messianism grew within Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33, since as these chapters now stand, messianism runs through the whole and is difficult to extricate from its literary context.[19] The apparently random juxtaposition of oracles of doom and oracles of hope still remains to be explained. The two are inextricably linked. The question is how?

One approach is that of R.E. Clements[20] and his student P.D. Wegner (who limits his study to Isaiah 7:10-17; 8:23-9:6; 11:1-9 and 32:1-8). They suggest that in these messianic texts we simply have 'new wine poured into old bottles'; that is, Isaianic passages have been considered by later editors to be messianic and thus reshaped or 'reread' (the concept of *relecture* is important in Wegner's treatment) to express messianic expectation.[21] Thus they envisage a continuing updating of the prophetic corpus, mostly during or after the Babylonian exile. Is this the best way to account for the apparently haphazard juxtaposition of oracles of doom and oracles of hope? Do they represent inherently different oracles addressed to different audiences living at different times? Or do they address different audiences, but audiences that lived more or less at the same time? The classic question of method, synchronic vs. diachronic, is here posed.[22]

Before we advance concrete suggestions, we must bring Zion theology, one of the major themes of Old Testament prophecy in general and of the book of Isaiah in particular, into our discussion.

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[19]'Radical redating of the biblical material (Wellhausen, Duhm, Kuenen) broke the back of the traditional understanding of the growth of OT messianism' (B.S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*, [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993], 453). Wegner's basic weakness in this regard is that he believes he is able to apply the strengths of both methods, the synchronic and diachronic, but as the saying goes, you cannot have your cake and eat it (*cf.* our review of Wegner in *Themelios* 20:3 [1995] 21). We concur, however with S. Talmon ('The Concept of *Mašîaḥ* and Messianism in Early Judaism' in J.H. Charlesworth [ed.], *The Messiah*, 79-115, esp. 93) that the biblical concept of the Messiah is multilinear and that we move from historical reality to ideation and idealization. On this, see below.

[20]R.E. Clements,' The Messianic Hope in the OT', *JSOT* 43 (1989), 14.

[21]*cf.*, Wegner, *Kingship*, Preface, p. VII and titles of chs. 2-5.

[22]Wegner (*ibid.*) admits to wanting to combine the diachronic and synchronic methods.

1. Zion Theology in Isaiah

The expectation of change for the better with regard to the king and a particular group of his people more closely associated with him is more often than not linked to an expression of hope in regard to Zion/ Jerusalem. Messianism as we defined it and what is known as 'Zion theology' are inextricably linked, so much so that for all practical purposes Zion theology is part and parcel of messianism.[23] What, then is Zion theology?

Simply put, Zion theology denotes God's ruling in and through 'Zion', the theological name for Jerusalem. God's rule is not only linked to the idea of him 'dwelling' in Zion in some abstract way (Dt. 12:11), but also to his ruling there through his representative on earth, the king. In Zion, 'divine and earthly spheres intersect'.[24] In the Book of Isaiah they intersect to the point of practically holding the whole book together.[25] Hints of this are to be found as early as the opening chapter, which introduces so many of the book's themes:

> And I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counsellors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed by justice [מִשְׁפָּט] and those in her who repent, by righteousness [צְדָקָה]. (Is. 1:26-27)

Commentators, unfortunately tend to separate these two verses, mostly because of what precedes and of what follows and consequently consider Isaiah 1:21-31 to be composite, though not necessarily inauthentic (dates vary anywhere between 722 and 701).[26] But do we not have here the classic prophetic pattern of accusation (1:21-23), purification (1:24-25) and restoration for those who 'return' (who are redeemed and who practise justice and righteousness, 1:26-27) and judgment for those who do not and continue to rebel (1:28-31)? There are two kinds of people and two kinds of messages, both linked to Zion. The pattern continues in chapter 2.

In Isaiah 2:1ff Zion is not just another subject among others to fit a certain pattern, it is the chapter's central theme.[27] The most glori-

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[23]See esp., G. von Rad's seminal study 'The City on the Hill' in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), 232-42.
[24]Dumbrell, *Search*, 82.
[25]Dumbrell, *Search*, 80-95 and 110-25; Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, 202-205; *cf. ABD* III, 481.
[26]Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-4*, 130f; Motyer, *Prophecy*, 50.
[27]For Dumbrell, *Search*, 81, Jerusalem is the key to the movement of the whole book of Isaiah.

ous hope of all concerning Zion perhaps comes to expression here. Alongside the pride of those who worship their riches, their military hardware and their false gods in whom they put their trust (2:6-22),[28] Zion is described as the centre of the world to which nations and peoples flow, and from which the word of the Lord, his law flows out.[29] So effectively does the Lord banish evil that universal peace ensues and 'they will learn war no more' (2:4d). The question, of course, is: Where is Israel in this wishful thinking? And: Where is her king?[30]

For most commentators the answer is easy: They are gone, both of them! Gone into exile to Babylon in 597 or 587 BC, together with those idolaters of the second part of the chapter. Only a dreamer over there, whose 'dross has been smelted away as with lye', whose 'alloy has been removed' (Is. 1:25) by means of the exile and whose only remaining hope is YHWH himself, can imagine a utopia such as in Isaiah 2:1ff. All hope in Israel and/or her king is gone forever! We ask: Is this so, or are there alternative audiences, people deserving to hear such messages of 'roses and lavender' amidst all the 'blood and iron'?[31]

Those who reason that there is no other explanation for Zion theology in the form it takes in Isaiah 2:1ff do so on the premise that before the Babylonian exile prophets were exclusively 'to afflict the comfortable and not to comfort the afflicted.'[32] Why? Simply, because there were, allegedly, only comfortable (people)! For such scholars, this position is sufficiently proved by the fact that there are many more oracles of doom than there are oracles of hope in practically all prophetic books coming from the eighth century BC. It was Wellhausen who decreed well over a century ago that a prophet would not all of a sudden 'make milk and honey flow from the cup of the wrath of God'.[33] Before the Babylonian exile, it is argued, there never were any people in Zion to whom an oracle of hope as Isaiah 2:1-4 might have been addressed. Only the exile to Babylon and the hard times that followed brought about a change in some of the people at least so as to

[28]The pattern can be seen elsewhere, *e.g.*, 'He who believes' (Is. 28:16) or is 'saved in returning and rest' (Is. 30:15) in contrast to the 'rebels and lying sons' in Is. 30:9.
[29]A. Alonso-Schökel, *Estudios de Poetica Hebrea*, (Barcelona, 1963) 196f.
[30]Dumbrell, *Search*, 85, believes the lack of Davidic messiahship exercised from Jerusalem in Is 2:1ff must be balanced by the messianic oracles found in Is. 7-11. We are not so sure, however that it is absent here.
[31]J. Wellhausen, *Die Kleinen Propheten Übersetzt und Erklärt* (4th ed; Berlin 1963) 96.
[32]L.C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 243
[33]Wellhausen, *ibid.*

lead a prophet to express such hope.[34]

We disagree with this view. Why should the sixth century BC be regarded as the earliest date at which such Zion-utopia could be imagined?[35] Admittedly, the universalism of Isaiah 2:1-4 is striking and rather unlike the Jewish particularism for which large parts of the Old Testament are known. But in this passage nothing is actually said of Israelites, only matters concerning her God. He dwells in his house on Mt. Zion and whole nations flock there to be instructed by his word.[36]

We see a parallel here with an earlier period. Solomon did not invite people to come to Jerusalem: they came on their own, attracted by what they had heard about Solomon's wisdom. We would agree with Dumbrell in tracing the origins of the vision of a passage such as Isaiah 2:1-4 to the time of Solomon.[37] The account in 1 Kings tells us that people from almost everywhere flocked to Jerusalem to hear his wise counsel (1 Ki. 4:34 [5:14]). The queen of Sheba's coming gives an idea of the extent of Solomon's fame (1 Ki. 10). Why, then, should such Zion-utopia be limited to, say Deutero-Isaiah only, especially if, as Williamson argues, Isaiah 40-55 has drawn on 2:2-4 and not vice versa?[38] True enough, this does not yet answer the question how one can best account for these nations' interest in the law (תּוֹרָה). But wisdom (חָכְמָה), which kings from everywhere came to admire in Solomon, is closely linked to תּוֹרָה, a word meaning first of all 'instruction'.[39] Doing what it says results in the practice of justice and righteousness.

In our view, then, the oracles of hope in Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33 arise from previous experiences of kings who practised justice and

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[34]R. de Vaux, 'The remnant of Israel according to the prophets', in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, (ET: London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972) 22f; F. Dreyfus, 'Reste d'Israël' in: *DBS* X [1981], 415ff. His distinction between 'reste rescapé' and 'reste d'élite' is a particularly lucid one.

[35]*Cf.*, S. Stohlmann, 'The Judean Exile after 701 BCE', in W. Hallo *et al.*, (eds.), *Scripture in Context II* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 147-75.

[36]Elsewhere (Schibler, *Le Livre de Michée* [Vaux-sur-Seine: Edifac, 1989] 90), we suggested that both Isaiah and Micah cite here an ancient promise of peace. It has nothing to do with the so-called belief in the inviolability of Zion, a myth Seitz has well debunked (*Zion's Final Destiny*, 147).

[37]Dumbrell, *Search*, 75ff.

[38]Williamson, *Book Called Isaiah*, 152 (see all of pp. 150-52).

[39]*Cf.* Ecclesiasticus 15:1. Or is the issue, rather the belief that there was, at the time of Isaiah no Law at all yet, at least not officially, in line with Wellhausen's other decree: Prophets come before the Law?

righteousness (*e.g.*, Is. 1:27; 28:16-17; 32:16-17). These texts are not to be viewed as later additions (reflecting a concept of the Messiah's good deeds) made to the much more frequent condemnatory texts so as to provide a balance. Rather, they may be dated to the eighth century BC, and the hope they express may properly be termed messianic.

2. *Dynastic Messianism and Royal Ideology*

Undoubtedly much of the messianism found in Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33 is a form of dynastic messianism, that is, it expresses a belief and hope that all descendants of David will match him in practising justice and righteousness, beginning with Solomon whose proverbial wisdom had attracted people from everywhere to Zion to hear it. It is linked to the so-called royal ideology found especially in Psalms 72, 89 and 132.[40] As David was the king *par excellence*, so there will always be a descendant of David like him: 'justice and righteousness are the foundation of his throne' (Ps. 89:14 [Heb. v. 15]; *cf.* 72:1-2); 'I will establish his line forever, and his throne as long as the heavens endure' (Ps. 89:30).

This ideology suggests an extraordinary expectation concerning David's descendants that gave hope to people who often represented but a mere remnant and were living in difficult circumstances. A classic example is Isaiah 9:6-7 [Heb. vv. 5-6]. Who was witnessing the 'great light' (9:2 [Heb. v. 1])? The land of Zebulon and Naphtali, *i.e.*, people from the Northern kingdom. With regard to Israel as a whole, they represent but a remnant. Yet, they will see the great light, the birth of the new heir to the throne. The fact both psalmist (see above) and prophet alike place such hopes on the arrival of a new heir to the Davidic throne suggests a strongly-held dynastic messianism, such that each Davidide could realize their ideal, that is, be the Messiah *par excellence*.[41] But it also means that often the ruler on the throne at the time did not live up to that expectation and that he needed to be replaced. The kings in power at the time of Isaiah are a

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[40]J. Coppens, *Le Messianisme Royal: Ses origines. Son développement. Son accomplissement*; (Lectio Divina 54; Paris: Cerf, 1968); H. Cazelles, *Le Messie de la Bible*, ch. 2; S. Talmon, *King, Cult and Calendar in Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1986) ch. 1; Wegner, *Kingship*, 307f;

[41]J. Coppens, 'Messianisme' in *Catholicisme-Hier-Aujourd'hui-Demain*, Vol. 9, col. 13: 'Si les psalmistes et les prophètes ont salué à leur avènement en termes aussi grandiloquents les davidides, c'est qu'en raison de leur foi en un messianisme dynastique ils pouvaient envisager et espérer en chacun des monarques de la lignée davidique la venue d'un roi susceptible de réaliser leur idéal, et, à ce titre… susceptible d'être envisagé comme un messiè potentiel.'

good case in point. Is 1-12 and 28-33 are most often linked to Ahaz and Hezekiah (1:1).[42] Both were living through two major political crises, the Syro-Ephraimite debacle in 734-732 BC and the invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BC. These traumatic events were just as much occasions for these two kings to have their 'dross smelted away as with lye' and their 'alloy removed' (Is. 1:25) as the events of 597 and 587 BC were for the last kings of Judah. 'Within the cleansing judgements of 734 and 701 lie the seeds for future hope and restoration. Against the faithlessness of Ahaz and his generation is to be viewed the trust of a righteous king and a faithful remnant'.[43] Hezekiah plays a major role in the book of Isaiah.[44] He is clearly depicted as supporting the prophet Isaiah (Is. 36-38), in stark contrast to his predecessor, Ahaz (Is. 7-8), whose role is comparable to that of king Jerobaom with regard to Amos (Am. 7) or of king Jehoiakim with regard to Jeremiah (Je. 19:1-15). Hezekiah was without doubt Isaiah's first Messiah.[45] According to Jeremiah 26:19, he was known for having been obedient to the divine word proclaimed by Isaiah well over a hundred years afterwards.

Thus messianism, kingship and Zion-theology are closely linked and part and parcel of the hope oracles found in Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33. However, within these chapters certain texts have been singled out for centuries as expressing more than messianic hope as defined above. Christians have believed that these texts point to Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, mostly on the basis of the New Testament's quoting of them or alluding to them. These texts, Isaiah 7:10-17; 9:1-6 and 11:1-9, came to be known as 'Messianic Prophecies'. To these we now turn.

IV. Messianic Prophecies[46]

The first two of these texts, 7:10-17 and 9:1-6, belong to the so-called memorial, a section that can just as appropriately be called 'the Book

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[42]Wegner, *Kingship*, 289-301(Excursus) shows how the dating of Is. 28-33 depends on that of 1-12.

[43]Seitz in *ABD* III:482, col. 1; again see Stohlmann, *op.cit.*,

[44]This is Seitz's basic thesis in: *Zion's Final Destiny*,

[45]Some even find archaeological support for this view: D.P. Cole, 'Archaeology and the Messiah Oracles of Isaiah 9 and 11' in M.D. Coogan *et al.* (eds.), *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994) 53-69. In our view, however, the new evidence is scanty.

of the Immanuel'[47] or 'the Book of Signs'.[48] The reason for this alternative nomenclature is obvious: both the name Immanuel and the term 'sign' play a pivotal role in the interpretation of Isaiah 7:10-17. At stake is the question whether or not King Ahaz will trust YHWH's word brought to him by Isaiah during the Syro-Ephraimite debacle (*cf.* 2 Ki. 16:5-9). That word is: Ask for a sign, any one (Is. 7:10-11)! But Ahaz will have nothing of it. He does not want 'to put YHWH to the test' (Is. 7:12), he says in a pretence of piety. Amazingly, Isaiah gives him a sign anyhow: 'The young woman (הָעַלְמָה; note the definite article) shall conceive and bear a son whose name will be Immanuel' (7:14). Interpretations of the Hebrew noun עַלְמָה here are legion.[49] In our view, the term refers to someone in the entourage of Ahaz, and there is much to be said for the opinion that 'Immanuel' refers to the new heir to the throne, that is, Hezekiah. For Isaiah, Hezekiah's birth heralds the presence of God among the faithful in Jerusalem in a most precarious situation.[50] Hence the theophoric name Immanuel = 'God is with us' (*sc.* even during the Syro-Ephraimite debacle).[51] The two kings threatening Ahaz are merely 'two smouldering stumps of firebrands' (Is 7:4); God is indeed with Ahaz and Jerusalem.

The truth encapsulated in the name Immanuel is emphasized in Isaiah 8:8, 10 and has for that reason probably led to the belief that it is more than just a promise made to Ahaz; it is a premonition or foreshadowing of additional things, yet to come:

A deeper meaning in the promise was apparent to the Jews of later

[46]See Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation, ad loc; cf.* also the recent reprint (1992) of F. Delitzsch's last book, written one month before his death: *Messianische Weissagungen in geschichtlicher Folge.* (Basel/Giessen: Brunnen, 1992). The classic remains: E. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament and a Commentary on the Messianic Predictions*, 4 Vols. (reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1956). *TRE* 16:648, would give as traditional messianic prophecies: Is. 9:1-6; 11:1-9; 32:1-8; 16:4b-5; and 'possibly' 7:14-16, but regards them all as exilic or postexilic. Contrast with Motyer's long list, p. 13, fn. 1, but he singles out the three classic ones (Is. 7:10-15; 9:1-7 [Heb. 8:23-9:6]; 11:1-16).
[47]Cazelles, *Le Messie*, 99
[48]*TRE* 16:645; *ABD* III, 480f.
[49]To our knowledge, the most thorough study is still: G. Brunet, *Essai sur l'Isaie de l'histoire*, (Paris: Picard, 1975).
[50]A. Caquot ('Leçons sur le Messianism' in: *Annuaire de l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes* [5ème section], Paris, 1964, 79) suggests that messianism occurs only in the context of a crisis which from a human perspective is insurmountable, such as the Syro-Ephraimite debacle in 734-732 or Sennacherib's invasion in 701, from which the new-born heir to the throne would deliver Jerusalem.
[51]A. Laato, *Who is Immanuel?* (Abo: Abo Akademis Forlag, 1988) 136-59 (Excursus).

> centuries... as yet unrealized... [though] congruent with the larger picture. Matthew [for one], unquestionably delighted with the agreement between the tradition about Jesus' birth and the words of Isaiah...[52]

We know this first messianic prophecy in Isaiah was discussed by Jews and Christians alike for centuries; but this was only because of Matthew's quotation of it (Mt. 1:23).[53] Matthew was simply following a well-established Jewish tradition, the annunciation type scene which probably had its origin in Samson's birth (Judg. 13) and linked the name Immanuel to the miraculous birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Now as with Isaiah and the exceptional birth theme, this birth is not a matter of God being physically 'with us' but God acting on our behalf.[54] If this is what Immanuel means, then we understand why Matthew includes the reference to this important name. At any rate, the name is not germane to his aim of finding Old Testament support for the virgin birth, nor was Jesus actually called thus. But, as God did not simply deal with Ahaz as he was expected to deal with his anointed, but wanted to act tangibly on his behalf, so in the miraculous, physical birth of Christ, God is with us in that he acted tangibly on behalf of his people to save them from their sins (Mt. 1:21).[55]

As to the second text, Isaiah 9:6-7 [Heb. vv. 5-6], we noted above that it is an excellent example of dynastic messianism.[56] Yet, as with Isaiah 7:14, it has been received as more than that for centuries. What looks like an enthronement text, most probably of Hezekiah—'establishing his kingdom for ever in justice and righteousness (Is. 9:7

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[52]D.A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13* (Dallas: Word, 1993) 20.

[53]Justin Martyr, *Tryphon* LXXI; Irenaeus, *Against Heresy*, III, 9.1; IV, 33.11; Calvin, *Institutes*, 1, II; ch. iv;

[54]'There are... strong reasons for believing that in Matthew 1:23 μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεός signifies that in Jesus God is present to bring salvation to his people rather than that Jesus as ὁ θεός is personally present with his people. Matthew is not saying, "someone who is 'God' is now physically with us, but 'God is acting on our behalf in the person of Jesus'"' (M.J. Harris, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992] 258).

[55]For centuries scholars have made attempts to identify this Immanuel and the accompanying signs surrounding his coming. For the evangelist Matthew, finally there was no doubt any more. When Jesus of Nazareth was born, the full light had come. He is the Immanuel of the world and his virgin birth the accompanying sign (Mt. 1:18-24). For centuries, too and despite many onslaughts against it, that fulfilment in Jesus has been accepted by uncounted millions of Christian believers as a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy.

[56]As to authorship, both Is. 7:10-17 and 9:1-6 are essentially attributed to Isaiah himself; *cf.* Wildberger, 371.

[Heb. v. 6])—is clothed in language that is too exalted, but also too militaristic (Is. 9:4-5 [Heb. vv. 3-4]) to be no more than a text celebrating either a new king's birth or coronation. But unlike Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6-7 is not cited in the New Testament, though there is a possible allusion to it in John 14:7b. Only 9:1 [Heb. 8:23] is (partly) cited in Matthew 4:14-16 (*cf.* Lk. 1:79), but with respect to Jesus' sojourn in the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, not with respect to his divinity.

However, on grounds of the hermeneutical principle of *sensus plenior*,[57] much Christian tradition (not just Händel's *Messiah*; see also Lk. 1:32-33) has for a long time understood the whole Immanuel tradition including Isaiah 9:6-7 [Heb. vv. 5-6] to contain incipient christological soteriology and has therefore felt it appropriate that it be read at Christmas as a proper text underlining Christ's divinity. The reason must be the appellations: 'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace'. After all, of the traditional messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, only this text uses אֵל (in 'Mighty God'; Ps. 45:7-8 has אֱלֹהִים). It is always used with reference to either divinity or the true God (*cf.* Is. 5:16; 12:2; 31:3; 40:18; 42:5). It is no doubt significant, too, that of the four word-pairs describing this extraordinary being, only אֵל is repeated in the next chapter (Is. 10:21) where the referent is clearly 'YHWH, the holy one of Israel' (Is. 10:20)[58]. Now as Harris observes:

> If the rendering of 'God *is* [emphasis mine] with us' find) support in the dual use of עמנו אל Immanu'el in Isaiah 8:8, 10, the translation 'God with us' looks to the messianic title אל גבור *'el gibbor* [Mighty God] in Isaiah 9:6 [9:5 MT] (*cf.* Is. 10:21) for justification, for if Isaiah 7:1-9:7 is considered a closely integrated unit containing the prophetic message to Judah... Isaiah 7:14 could be interpreted in the light of Isaiah 9:6.[59]

For other exegetes, the other word-pairs also point either individually or cumulatively to divinity, *i.e.*, in an Ancient Near Eastern sense,[60] especially Egyptian, or with regard to the one true God of the Bible.[61]

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[57]R.E. Brown, *The Sensus Plenior of Sacred Scripture*, (Baltimore: 1955) 92; *cf.*, 'Interpretation' *ISBE* (rev. 1992) II:870, col. 2.

[58]Delitzsch's discussion (*Isaiah*, 248-50) of the telling accentuation of the MT is still one of the best.

[59]Harris, *Jesus as God*, 257, fn. 7.

[60]Wildberger, 381 (but see 386-88); Wegner, *Kingship*, 190;

[61]Motyer, *Prophecy*, 104f; Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 247f; Delitzsch, *Weissagungen*, 102; *Isaiah*, 251, 253 is more nuanced.

There seems to be no *via media*.

The third messianic prophecy in Isaiah 1-12 is found in 11:1-9. It is centred mostly on the twin expressions 'shoot' and 'branch' in v. 1. The shoot comes out of 'the stump of Jesse'. A stump implies the cutting of a tree, but its shoot implies, that there is still life in it. The image is clearly one of hope regardless of what caused the cutting of the tree.[62] Now the tree is the tree of Jesse, King David's father. Once more, hope is associated with kingship. But this is no mere messianism such as we defined it above. The spirit of YHWH, *i.e.*, 'the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD' (Is. 11:2) shall reside on this shoot and the lost paradise be regained. Not only will the shoot coming out of the stump of Jesse judge justly, but nature will change so that wild animals will no longer kill. 'They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea' (Is. 11:9). As Talmon observes, we have passed from historical reality (Is. 7:14-16) to ideation (the creation of an idea, Is. 9:5-6) and now to idealization (Is. 11:1-10)[63]. But, along with this progressive dehistoricisation comes a gradual opaqueness, a move away from the *hic et nunc*. With the unusual reference to Jesse rather than David, it is quite possible that the text is meant to refer to more. It is no longer a matter of a mere continuance of the Davidic line, but probably a question of a wholly new beginning.[64] 'The movement is from qualifications to performance to results...'[65] No wonder, then, that ever since Jerome at least, it has been believed that Matthew (in Mt. 2:23), in what is basically a word-play, alludes either to Jesus as a 'Nazirite' or to the promised 'branch' in Isaiah 11:1.[66] Thus Isaiah 11:1-4 refers to more than a descendant of David; it refers to a new David, one who will judge with justice and decide with equity.[67] For Christians it is clear: only Jesus of Nazareth, God's incarnate son, the Messiah *par excellence* fulfils this text ultimately[68].

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[62]Wegner, *Kingship*, 231ff discusses the question whether it implies the bypassing of David's line.

[63]Talmon, 'The Concept of *Mašîaḥ*', 95, 97; Seitz: 'a certain obscurity', *ABD* III, 481.

[64]So von Rad, *Old Testament Theology II*, 170 followed by Dumbrell, *Search*, 91. Similarly Motyer, *Prophecy*, 121: '...the shoot is not just another king in David's line but rather another David.'

[65]Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 278.

[66]Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 40-42.

[67]Whether he is the Immanuel of Is 7:14 (Hagner, *ibid.*, 41) is another question which cannot be answered on the basis of Is. 11.

All three traditional messianic prophecies have an expectancy about them that sets them apart from the rest of the texts that express hope in Isaiah 1-12, and a particular person to whom a particular name or term is attached is mentioned: 'Immanuel' (7:14), 'Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace' (9:6 [Heb. v. 5]) and 'shoot', 'branch' (*cf.* 4:2) and 'root' (11:1,10). All of these names or terms have 'a measure of intended opaqueness' (Talmon) about them that simply eludes exegesis. And yet, as with other enigmatic terms found in the Old Testament—'seed of the woman' (Gn. 3:15), 'Shiloh' (Gn. 49:10), 'star and sceptre' (Nu. 24:17), 'prophet like Moses' (Dt. 18:15), to name only the ones in the Pentateuch—they have traditionally been taken to denote somebody special.[69] Who? That is the question. As one reads of these persons and what is expected of them or associated with them, it is as if one were to go beyond the immediate historical context and one's hope were transferred to a more distant and thus opaque future leader. We should, perhaps not speak of 'progressive dehistoricisation' (Talmon), but simply of gradual opaqueness that increased until the expected final light that these names and terms express would actually arrive. When Jesus of Nazareth had come, New Testament writers, above all Matthew but also Paul, knew 'the times were fulfilled' (Gal. 4:4), *i.e.*, the age-old promises of the Old Testament had come true. We have difficulties in discerning the degree to which the promises actually came about, a question Old Testament Theology wrestles with; but that they were believed to have come about, there is little doubt. What P. Beauchamp says concerning Isaiah 53 applies to all traditional messianic prophecies: 'Prévoir un médecin est une chose, le désigner à l'avance en sa singularité en est une autre.'[70] Old Testament writers saw that there would be a doctor, but they never disclosed his identity entirely. So it is vain to seek complete disclosure in the Old Testament. Only the New Testament discloses entirely.[71] What is important is to realize that messianism in general and messianic prophecies in

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[68]Unlike Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6 [Heb. v. 5]), Isaiah 11:1ff has, ever since Duhm (1892), generally been considered to be of late, post-exilic origin. However, it is again 'under investigation' as to whether it does not belong to the initial Isaianic corpus after all, at least in part. *Cf.* Williamson, *Book Called Isaiah*, 233 (referring to H. Barth, J. Vermeylen and K. Nielsen)

[69]S.H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation. The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum*, (1974) 44, 52

[70]P. Beauchamp, 'Lecture et relecture du quatrième chant du Serviteur. D'Isaie à Jean', in J. Vermeylen (ed.), *The Book of Isaiah* (BETL LXXXI; Leuven: Leuven UP, 1989) 354.

particular all had a beginning, a *terminus a quo*, and an end, a *terminus ad quem*, and in between a whole range or history of fulfilments. But when Jesus of Nazareth had come, the early church and generations of Christians following it have believed that, ultimately speaking, every messianic prophecy, every messianism even, found its fulfilment in Jesus, *the* 'Christ' which—let us not forget this each time we say it—means the Messiah. It is thus that we understand Paul in 2 Corinthians 1:19-20:

> 'For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not 'Yes and No' but in him it is always 'Yes'. For in him every one of God's promises is a 'Yes'. For this reason it is through him that we say the 'Amen', to the glory of God. '

[71]C.K. Beale (ed.), *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the use of the Old Testament in the New*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994).

CHAPTER 6

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD IN THE 'SERVANT SONGS' OF ISAIAH: A SECOND MOSES FIGURE[1]

G.P. Hugenberger

Summary

No explanation for the identity of the servant of the Lord in the 'servant songs' of Isaiah commands a scholarly consensus. This study attempts to overcome the pre-sent impasse by rejecting the dismemberment of Isaiah 40-66 advanced by Duhm and others, who isolate the 'servant songs' from their immediate literary context. Taking account of that context, which is dominated by a pervasive second exodus theme, this essay argues that Isaiah's servant figure is to be identified with the expected 'prophet like Moses' (Dt. 18:14ff.; 34:10ff.). Such an approach enriches the interpretation of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 in particular and offers substantial support for the New Testament's messianic interpretation without presupposing that interpretation, as is often done.

[1]This essay is a revised version of a paper read on 5th July 1994 before the Old Testament Study Group of the Tyndale Fellowship in Swanwick, Derbyshire.

I. Introduction

In spite of the proliferation of scholarly attempts to identify the servant of the Lord in the so-called 'servant songs' of Isaiah (42:1-4 [Heb. v. 9]; 49:1-6 [13]; 50:4-9 [11]; and 52:13-53:12), as yet no theory appears capable of commanding a scholarly consensus.[2] On the other hand, the New Testament's messianic interpretation remains unconvincing as an original referent for the servant figure because it seems too remote from any posited historical context for Deutero-Isaiah.[3] After surveying a few commonly proposed identifications for the servant, the present study will attempt to rehabilitate an earlier view that, with important exceptions, has been largely neglected in recent scholarship, namely an identification of the servant with the expected 'prophet like Moses' mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:14ff. and 34:10ff.

II. Alternative Identifications of the Servant in the Servant Songs of Isaiah

1. The Servant in the Servant Songs of Isaiah refers to corporate Israel[4]

Although the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:32-35 apparently considered it self-evident that Isaiah 53 refers to an individual, many modern interpreters hold that the figure identified as 'my servant' (עַבְדִּי) in 52:13 and 53:11 bears a collective reference, whether it is to the nation

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[2]For a summary of attempts to identify the servant figure, see C.R. North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah. An Historical and Critical Study* (2nd ed; Oxford: OUP, 1956); H.H. Rowley, *The Servant of the Lord and other Essays on the Old Testament* (2nd ed; Oxford: Blackwell, 1965); D.J.A. Clines, *I, He, We and They: A Literary Approach to Isaiah 53* (JSOTS 1; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1976); C.G. Kruse, 'The Servant Songs: Interpretive Trends since C.R. North', *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 8:1 (1978) 3-27; and D. F. Payne, 'Recent Trends in the Study of Isaiah 53', *Irish Biblical Studies* 1 (1979) 3-18.

[3]Given the mounting evidence for the literary unity of the book of Isaiah in its canonical form, the term 'Deutero-Isaiah' is retained here merely as a scholarly convention. No particular scheme of dating or compositional history for the book is presupposed.

[4]H.L. Ginsberg considers Daniel 11:33-35; 12:3 to offer evidence that the earliest interpretation of Isaiah's servant was a collective one since it describes faithful Jews of the Antiochene period as the 'wise', alluding to Is. 52:13 ('The Oldest Interpretation of the Suffering Servant', *VT* 3 [1953] 400-404). *Cf.* also J. Day, '*DA'AṮ* "Humiliation" in Isaiah LIII 11 in the Light of Isaiah LIII 3 and Daniel XII 4, and the Oldest Known Interpretation of the Suffering Servant', *VT* 30 (1980) 97-103; J.J. Collins, *Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 385, 393; R.J. Clifford, 'Isaiah, Book of (Second Isaiah)', *ABD*, 3, 490-501, at 500.

of Israel as a whole, to an ideal Israel, or to a faithful remnant of Israel.[5] In support of a collective reference, it may be noted that the singular terms 'my servant' (עַבְדִּי), 'his servant' (עַבְדּוֹ), and 'servant' (עֶבֶד) appear twentyfive times in the book of Isaiah.[6] In twelve of these (all in chs. 40-53) the intended reference appears to be Israel.[7] For example, 41:8f. reads:

> But you, Israel, my servant [עַבְדִּי], Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, 'You are my servant [עַבְדִּי], I have chosen you and not cast you off...'

Furthermore, in the servant songs there are several other descriptions or designations for the servant which are also used quite explicitly of Israel elsewhere in Isaiah. In particular, in the first servant song the expression 'whom I uphold' (אֶתְמָךְ־בּוֹ, 42:1), which qualifies 'my servant', parallels a similar promise addressed to Israel in 41:10, 'I will uphold you' (תְּמַכְתִּיךָ). Also in 42:1 'my chosen' (בְּחִירִי) is a designation that is used of all Israel in 43:20; 45:4; 65:9, 15, 22 (*cf.* 1 Ch. 16:13; Pss. 105:6, 43; 106:5). Likewise, the expression 'called me from the womb'

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[5]*Cf., e.g.*, J. Muilenburg, who identifies the servant with Israel ('The Book of Isaiah, Ch. 40-66', *Interpreter's Bible*, 5 [New York: Abingdon, 1956] 406-14) and N.H. Snaith, who identifies the servant more precisely with the Israelites who were exiled in 597 BC and perhaps also 586 BC ('Isaiah 40-66: A Study of the Teaching of Second Isaiah and Its Consequences', in *Studies on the Second Part of the Book of Isaiah* [VTS 14; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977] 135-264, at 170). *Cf.* J.E. Rembaum, 'The Development of a Jewish Exegetical Tradition Regarding Isaiah 53', *HTR* 75 (1982) 239-311.

A significant variant of this approach is offered by J. Lindblom, who views the servant as an allegorical symbol for Israel (*The Servant Songs in Deutero-Isaiah: A New Attempt to Solve an Old Problem* [Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1951] 46-51, 102-104). *Cf.* L.E. Wilshire ('The Servant-City: A New Interpretation of the "Servant of the Lord" in the Servant Songs of Deutero-Isaiah', *JBL* 94 [1975] 356-67) and K. Jeppesen ('Mother Zion, Father Servant: A Reading of Isaiah 49-55', in H.A. McKay and D.J.A. Clines [eds.], *Of Prophets' Visions and the Wisdom of Sages. Essays in Honour of R. Norman Whybray on his Seventieth Birthday* [JSOTS 162; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993] 109-25).

[6]In Isaiah 'my servant' (עַבְדִּי) appears fifteen times: 20:3; 22:20; 37:35; 41:8, 9; 42:1, 19; 43:10; 44:1, 2, 21; 45:4; 49:3; 52:13; 53:11. 'His servant' (עַבְדּוֹ) appears four times: 44:26; 48:20; 50:10; 63:11 (see *BHS* notes). 'Servant' (עֶבֶד) appears six times: 24:2; 42:19; 44:21; 49:5, 6, 7.

[7]Is. 41:8, 9; 42:19 (twice); 43:10; 44:1, 2, 21 (twice); 45:4; 48:20; and 49:3. The plural term 'servants' nowhere appears before ch. 53. Starting in 54:17 it appears eleven times to the exclusion of the singular term. In each case it refers to the people of God, including converted foreigners, as in 56:6 (*cf.* 56:3).

(מִבֶּטֶן קְרָאָנִי) in 49:1 in the second servant song finds a parallel in 'formed you in the womb' (וְיֹצֶרְךָ מִבֶּטֶן), which is addressed to Israel in 44:2, 24. Additionally, 'he named me' (הִזְכִּיר שְׁמִי) in 49:1 may find a parallel in 'I have called you by name' (קָרָאתִי בְשִׁמְךָ), which is addressed to Israel in 43:1. Finally, אוֹר גּוֹיִם ('a light to the nations') which appears in 49:6, is used of all Israel in 51:4 and perhaps 42:6, although this latter text may refer to an individual.

With reference to the fourth servant song, where the servant suffers, dies, and yet apparently lives (53:10f.), it is notable that the sufferings of Israel are similarly depicted in Ezekiel 37 as entailing a figurative death and resurrection. Moreover, it is possible that Israel's 'death' was thought to have benefited the nations, as is suggested by the imagery of Isaiah 53, by virtue of the witness of faithful exilic Israelites, such as Daniel, Esther, and Mordecai (*cf., e.g.*, Est. 8:17; Zc. 2:11; see also Is. 2:1-4).[8] Furthermore, the imagery of being as sheep led to slaughter in 53:7 is used also of Israel in Psalm 44:22. Even the remarkable expression '...he shall bear their iniquities' (וַעֲוֹנֹתָם הוּא יִסְבֹּל) in 53:11 need not exclude an identification with Israel since it does not require the notion of vicarious suffering. It can be used quite generally to refer to those who suffer the consequences of the offences of others, as is the case in Lamentations 5:7, 'Our ancestors sinned; they are no more, and we bear their iniquities' (אֲנַחְנוּ [Q: וַאֲנַחְנוּ] עֲוֹנֹתֵיהֶם סָבָלְנוּ).

In spite of its attractiveness, however, there are three serious objections to this view. First, the servant suffers or dies, according to 53:9, 'though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.' Similarly, the servant confesses in 50:5, 'The Lord Yahweh has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward.' Although righteousness is promised for eschatological Israel (*cf.* 1:26f.; 32:16f.; 53:11; 60:21; 61:3, 10f.; 62:2, 12), Deutero-Isaiah repeatedly stresses that contemporary Israel is a sinful people who suffer on account of their own transgressions (40:2; 42:18-25; 43:22-28; 47:7; 48:18f.; 50:1; 54:7; 57:17; 59:2ff.). This point is made specifically with reference to the remnant in 43:22; 46:3, 12; 48:1, 8; 53:6, 8; 55:7; 58:1ff.; 63:17; 64:5-7.[9]

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[8]Against this, however, see H.M. Orlinsky, 'The So-Called "Servant of the Lord" and "Suffering Servant" in Second Isaiah', in *Studies on the Second Part of the Book of Isaiah*, 3-133.

[9]Although Isaiah acknowledges that Babylon acted without mercy (47:6; *cf.* Zc. 1:15), against the supposition that Israel's corporate sufferings went beyond the requirements of divine justice, Isaiah stresses rather that judgement had been tempered by divine mercy (*cf., e.g.*, 1:9; 44:22; 48:9; 57:16).

Second, with B. Duhm it is notable that while outside the servant songs the 'servant' figure clearly does refer to corporate Israel, the songs themselves are distinguished precisely by the fact that within each of them the 'servant' appears to be an individual.[10] Especially remarkable is 49:1ff., which introduces the second servant song. The servant of the Lord is called 'Israel' in verse 3, but in verses 5 and 6 he is distinguished from another 'Israel', which from the context can only refer to the repentant remnant (49:3-6):

> He said to me, 'You are my servant, *Israel*, in whom I will display my splendour.' But I said, 'I have laboured to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. Yet what is due me is in Yahweh's hand, and my reward is with my God.' And now Yahweh says—he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather *Israel* to himself, for I am honoured in the eyes of Yahweh and my God has been my strength—he says: 'It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of *Israel* I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.'[11]

Given the well-established dual usage of the term 'Israel' elsewhere, where it can refer either to the individual patriarch or to the nation of which he was the progenitor, there can be no inherent objection to a similar dual usage of this term within Isaiah, where it bears both an individual and a collective reference.

Moreover, there are at least four other examples where the songs appear to distinguish the servant from the repentant remnant of Israel to whom he ministers. In 42:3 the servant is differentiated from needy and tender-conscienced Israelites (the 'bruised reed', which he will not break, and 'the dimly burning wick', which he does not quench).[12] A similar contrast is implied by 42:6 and 49:8, where the servant is promised that he will be made 'a covenant for the people'. A final example is found in 53:8: '...For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people' (עַמִּי). From the

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[10]B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja Übersetzt und Erklärt* (4th ed; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1922) 311.

[11]Although the originality of 'Israel' in 49:3 in the MT has been disputed (see, *e.g.*, S.O.P. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* [ET; Oxford: Blackwell, 1956] 462-64; Orlinsky, 'The So-Called "Servant of the Lord"', 79-89), its inclusion is supported by all Hebrew MSS except *Kenn* 96, by both 1QIsa[a] and 1QIsa[b], as well as by the LXX (except LXX[Q,534], which read Ιαχωβ in place of Ισραηλ), the Targum, the Vulgate, and the Peshitta. It is also favoured by the principle of *lectio difficilior*.

context 'my people' (עַמִּי) must refer to the forgiven, restored people of God, whether the 'my' refers to Yahweh or to the prophet. Accordingly, an identification of the servant with Israel is excluded because the 'he' who was 'cut off' cannot have the same referent as 'my people'.[13]

The third and final objection to an identification of the servant in the songs with corporate Israel is the observation that throughout Isaiah whenever the pronouns 'we', 'our', or 'us' are introduced abruptly, as in 53:1ff. (that is, without an explicit identification of the speakers, as in 2:3; 3:6; 4:1; *etc.*), it is always the prophet speaking on behalf of the people of Israel with whom he identifies (1:9f.; 16:6; 24:26; 33:2, 20; 42:24; 59:9-12; 63:15-19; 64:3-11; *etc.*).[14] Accordingly, if the 'we' or 'us' in 53:1ff. is the prophet speaking on behalf of Israel, then the 'he' or 'him' of these same verses cannot also be a reference to Israel.

Consistent with this observation, other considerations support an interpretation of the 'we' in 53:6 as a reference to Israel, with whom the prophet identifies: 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and Yahweh has laid on him the iniquity of us all.' There are well known parallels for the comparison between Israel and sheep who have gone astray: Psalm 95:7-10; 119:176; Jeremiah 50:6.[15] At several points within Isaiah the prophet acknowledges both his own sinfulness and the universality of sin among the people of Israel (*cf.* 6:5; 59:11-13; 64:5-9). Accordingly, if the 'we' of 53:6 is Israel, with whom the prophet identifies (hence the emphatic comprehensiveness of the first person plural references: '*all* we' [כֻּלָּנוּ] and 'us *all*' [כֻּלָּנוּ]), the 'him' cannot at the same time be a reference to Israel.[16]

In summary, although surrounded by texts that refer to corporate Israel as a servant, the servant of the servant songs, who innocent-

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[12]*Cf.* 40:28-31; 51:4; 61:3. Alternatively, R.F. Melugin argues that 42:3 needs to be interpreted in light of 19:6; 36:6; and 43:17. Accordingly, the verse underscores the uncompromising fidelity of the servant: He 'will not rely on a crushed reed and thus break it; nor will he depend upon and thus extinguish a dimly-burning wick' (*The Formation of Isaiah 40-55* [BZAW 141; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1976] 99).

[13]This conclusion holds whether or not one chooses to emend the MT, 'my people' (עַמִּי), to read 'his people' (עַמּוֹ) with 1QIsa[a].

[14]See F. Delitzsch, *Isaiah* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1873) Vol. II, 310.

[15]Other texts compare the people of Israel to a wandering shepherdless flock: Nu. 27:17; 1 Ki. 22:17; 2 Ch. 18:16; Zc. 10:2.

[16]For additional arguments against the collective interpretation of the servant figure, see J. Fischer, *Das Buch Isaias, II Teil* (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1939) 10f.; North, *The Suffering Servant*, 6ff.

ly and obediently suffers for the transgression of the people (53:4-12) and who brings salvation to the Gentiles and restores Jacob/Israel to Yahweh (49:5-6), is not to be equated with corporate Israel. By allowing him to share the servant designation of corporate Israel, however, and in one verse even the name 'Israel' (49:3), the prophet may be suggesting that this one is everything Israel should have been, as he faithfully fulfils the role to which Israel had been called.[17]

2. *The Servant in the Servant Songs of Isaiah as an Historical, Future, or Ideal Individual*

(1) A Prophetic Servant (Deutero-Isaiah himself)

If the servant is not to be identified exclusively as a collective reference to Israel, it may plausibly refer to some individual who was a predecessor or a contemporary of the author, or perhaps it refers to the prophet himself.[18] This was the suggestion of the Ethiopian eunuch: '...About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' (Acts 8:34) An indirect corporate reference is still possible, however, if the individual servant is intended as the representative or example for his people.[19]

In favour of an identification with the prophet himself is the fact that in 20:3 Isaiah is explicitly identified as 'my servant': 'Then Yahweh said, "Just as my servant Isaiah [עַבְדִּי יְשַׁעְיָהוּ] has walked naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and a portent against

[17]*Cf.* the frequently cited pyramid analogy of Delitzsch, according to which the 'servant' designation is used of Israel as a whole (the base of the pyramid), it is used also of the purified remnant of Israel (the middle section), and it is used finally of the coming saviour (the apex), who is the embodiment of Israel (*Isaiah*, Vol. II, 174f.).

[18]That the servant in all four songs is the prophet himself is held by, among many others, J. Begrich (*Studien zu Deuterojesaja*, [BWANT 4/25; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1938]), R.N. Whybray (*Isaiah 40-66* [London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1975] 71, 171-83), and K. Elliger (*Deuterojesaja in seinem Verhältnis zu Tritojesaja* [BWANT 63; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933]; *idem*, *Deuterojesaja. 1. Teilband: Jesaja 40,1-45,7* [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1978] 198-221). Of course, there are significant variations in detail.

[19]This appears to be the logic of the New Testament authors, who combine the collective and individual interpretations of the servant songs by applying the details of the servant songs both to Jesus and to the church, since they are viewed as one. *Cf.*, *e.g.*, 'there was no deceit in his mouth' in 53:9, which is applied to Christ in 1 Pet. 2:22, but to those who follow the lamb in Rev. 14:5. Note also how 49:6 is applied to Christ in Acts 26:23, but to Paul and Silas in Acts 13:47. Similarly, in Rom. 8:33f. Paul applies 50:8-9, taken from the third servant song, to the church.

Egypt and Ethiopia..."' Similarly 44:26 applies the term 'his servant' (עַבְדּוֹ) either to Isaiah, or at least to the prophets as a class:

> ...who confirms the word of his servant [עַבְדּוֹ], and fulfils the prediction of his messengers; who says of Jerusalem, 'It shall be inhabited', and of the cities of Judah, 'They shall be rebuilt, and I will raise up their ruins...'[20]

Perhaps the most compelling proof, however, that the servant is to be equated with Deutero-Isaiah is the presence of first person pronominal references in the second and third servant songs (*e.g.*, 49:1, 'Yahweh called *me* before I was born...').[21]

Other details concerning the servant support a prophetic identity. This is so, for example, with the themes of rejection and suffering in the third and fourth servant songs (50:6-9; 53:3-12; *cf.* 42:4; 49:4, 7). Such rejection was predicted for Isaiah himself in 6:10 and was a common experience of many of the prophets. As with the servant in 53:7, the image of a lamb being led to the slaughter is employed in Jeremiah 11:19 to describe the prophet Jeremiah's sufferings. Likewise, just as the servant bears the punishment of the people in 53:4ff., so also in Ezekiel 4:4-6 the prophet Ezekiel is instructed to bear the punishment of Israel. Furthermore, the intercessory work of the servant predicted in 53:12 is suggestive of a prophet: '...yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.' See, for example, Genesis 20:7; 1 Samuel 12:23; Jeremiah 7:16; 27:18. In 42:1 the emphasis on the servant's enduing with the spirit in 42:1 is consistent with a prophetic identification (*cf.* 61:1; Nu. 11:25ff.; Ne. 9:30; Zc. 7:12; *etc.*), as is his work in proclaiming the law in 42:4 (*cf.* 8:16). Accordingly, the servant confesses in 49:2, 'He made my mouth like a sharp sword...' This prophetic cast is perhaps most clear in the third servant song:

> The Lord Yahweh has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word... Who among you fears Yahweh and obeys the voice of his servant, who walks in darkness and has no light, yet trusts in the name of Yahweh and relies upon his God? (50:4, 10)

In spite of the strengths of this approach and the likelihood that there

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[20]Outside Isaiah the servant designation is used of various prophets. *Cf.*, *e.g.*, Ahijah in 1 Ki. 14:18; Elijah in 1 Ki. 18:36, *etc.*; Jonah in 2 Ki.14:25.

[21]See, *e.g.*, Begrich, *Studien zu Deuterojesaja*, 132; A. Bentzen, *King and Messiah* (ET; London: Lutterworth, 1955) 67.

are prophetic traits in the portrait of the servant, there are other characteristics that cannot be harmonized with a prophetic identity, and the attempt to equate the servant with Deutero-Isaiah is unconvincing. Although the appearance of first person pronominal references for the servant in the second and third songs is striking, it is not sufficient to establish an identification with Deutero-Isaiah since this theory leaves unexplained the use of third person references for the servant in the first and fourth songs, which purportedly are no less autobiographical.[22] Moreover, it is simply not the case that unintroduced first person references within prophetic discourse necessarily refer either to God or to the prophet. While this is a typical practice, there are a sufficient number of counter-examples, such as Isaiah 61:10, where the unannounced speaker appears to be a personified Zion, to require caution. Further, as mentioned earlier, whenever the pronouns 'we', 'our', or 'us' are introduced abruptly in Isaiah, as in 53:1ff., it is always the prophet speaking on behalf of the people of Israel, with whom he identifies. Accordingly, if the 'we' or 'us' in 53:1ff. is the prophet speaking on behalf of Israel, as the emphatic universality of 53:6 seems to require, then the 'he' or 'him' of these same verses cannot also be a reference to the prophet.[23]

Furthermore, it is only with difficulty that the servant's commission to 'bring forth/establish justice in the earth' in 42:1, 3f. can be applied to a prophet.[24] It is also hard to square what is said of the exaltation of the servant in 52:13 ('See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high') and his impact on 'many nations' and 'kings' in 52:15 (*cf.* 49:7) with the experience of Deutero-Isaiah or that of virtually any other prophet. This latter difficulty is recognised by many interpreters who favour the present approach. As a result, H.M. Orlinsky and R.N. Whybray, among others, argue that 52:13-15 is an independent oracle promising the reversal of Israel's fortunes (Israel is 'my servant' in 52:13), and it ought to be detached from 53:1-12 (where the prophet Deutero-Isaiah is 'my

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[22]See North, *The Suffering Servant*, 196f.

[23]This interpretation of 53:6 finds support in other texts, such as 6:5; 59:12, 16; 64:6, in which the prophet acknowledges his own sin and personal disqualification.

[24]Whybray does not succeed in establishing his claim that 'bring forth justice' (יוֹצִיא מִשְׁפָּט) in 42:1, 3 and 'establish justice' (יָשִׂים מִשְׁפָּט) in 42:4 mean merely 'to publish/proclaim God's universal rule' (*Isaiah 40-66*, 72f.). Although 'bring forth justice' (יצא, Hiphil with מִשְׁפָּט) is found nowhere else, the traditional rendering is favoured by 51:4; Hab. 1:4, 7; Ps. 17:2, where the Qal of יצא appears with מִשְׁפָּט. The expression 'establish justice' (שׂים with מִשְׁפָּט) is found in Ex. 15:25; Jos. 24:25; 1 Sa. 30:25; and Is. 28:17, none of which support Whybray's proposal.

servant' in 53:12).[25] Such a suggestion, however, is unconvincing in the face of the coherence of 52:15b with 53:1a and the impressive A-B-C-B-A concentric literary structure of 52:13-53:12 as a whole.[26] In particular, the terminology of 'my servant' (52:13 and 53:11) offers an *inclusio,* as does also the theme of the servant's exaltation in the two A-sections: 52:13-15 and 53:10-12. These A-sections are distinguished by their use of 'my', 'I', and 'many'. On the other hand, both B-sections, 53:1-3 and 53:7-9, which stress the servant's rejection, and the central C-section, 53:4-6, which stresses the significance of the servant's suffering, employ 'we' and 'our'.[27] Accordingly, although the exaltation in 52:13 is particularly troublesome for an identification of the servant in that text as the prophet, the parallel exaltation in 53:12 is no less so: 'Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong...'[28]

Finally, as observed by J.L. McKenzie, from the context of chs. 40-66 it would be quite unexpected for Isaiah to be intensely personal in these servant songs, as is claimed by those who identify the servant with the prophet.[29] In his larger work the prophet hides himself so thoroughly behind his message that the resulting composition is among the least biographical of any of the prophets.

(2) A Royal Servant (including the traditional Messianic View)[30]

Without diminishing the impressive list of evidences in favour of prophetic elements in the portrait of the servant figure, other scholars have adduced equally cogent arguments for recognizing various royal aspects to his work. The designation 'servant' (עֶבֶד) is commonly used

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[25]Orlinsky, 'The So-Called "Servant of the Lord"', 17-23; Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66,* 169f.

[26]For recognition of the concentric structure of the fourth song, involving five paragraphs of three verses each, see, *e.g.*, F.D. Kidner, 'Isaiah', in *NBCR* (Leicester: IVP, 1970) 618; and G.W. Grogan, 'Isaiah', in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary,* 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) 300. *Cf.* also J.D. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66* (Waco: Word Books, 1987) 229.

[27]For this *inclusio* as an argument against detachment of 52:13-15, see C. Stuhlmueller, 'Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah', in R.E. Brown *et al.* (eds.), *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990) 342.

[28]*Cf.* 49:7. See also Rowley, who considers it incredible that the servant could be other than a future figure. He remarks, 'To suppose that the prophet cherished the confidence that he himself was destined to achieve this mission, yet died without even beginning it, is to ascribe these glorious songs to empty egotism' (*The Servant of the Lord*, 52-53).

[29]*Second Isaiah* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968) xlvii. *Cf.* G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (ET; Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1962, 1965) Vol. II, 238.

of royal figures both within Isaiah and elsewhere. For example, 37:35 identifies David as 'my servant': 'For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David' (דָּוִד עַבְדִּי) David is also identified as 'the servant of Yahweh' (עֶבֶד יְהוָה) in Psalm 18:1; 36:1, and pronominal forms of the term 'servant' (עֶבֶד; *i.e.*, 'my servant', 'your servant', 'his servant'), referring to Yahweh, are applied to David in dozens of other verses.[31] Likewise, in 42:1 the designation 'my chosen one' (בְּחִירִי) for the servant may also suggest a royal identity, since this term is applied to David in Psalm 89:3 [Heb. v. 4].

The assertion in 42:1 that Yahweh has placed his Spirit on his servant is congruent with a royal identity (*cf.* 11:1-3), but it does not require one. The intended result of that enduing, however, does favour a royal identity: the servant 'will bring forth justice' in 42:1, 3 and 'establish justice in the earth' in 42:4 (*cf.* 51:4).

In the fourth song the texts which describe the response of earthly kings to the servant (52:14-15) and which promise victory and the exaltation of the servant (52:13; 53:12) likewise support a royal identity for the servant. The same is true of the honorific acknowledgement by kings and princes, who will 'stand up' and also 'prostrate themselves' before the servant in 49:7.

In 53:2 the twin metaphors of the tender shoot and the root, though less clear in their implication, may also suggest a royal figure. Supporting this implication is the mention of the 'root of Jesse' (שֹׁרֶשׁ יִשַׁי) in 11:10 (although the vocabulary differs from 53:2; compare also the 'branch' [צֶמַח] imagery for the Davidic scion in 11:1, found also in Je. 23:5; 33:15; Zc. 3:8; 6:12).[32]

Striking parallels between the servant figure in the songs and the depiction of Cyrus in 44:28-45:13 (*cf.* 41:1-7, 25; 48:14) include the general similarity between the prediction prior to their birth of the

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[30]For the royal character of the servant, especially in the first song, see W.A.M. Beuken, '*Mišpāṭ*: The First Servant Song and Its Canonical Context', *VT* 22 (1972) 1-30, esp. 2-4; R.J. Clifford, 'Isaiah 40-66', in J.L. Mays (ed.), *Harper's Bible Commentary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988) 575. O. Kaiser recognises the presence of royal (Davidic) traits in the servant of the first three songs, but Kaiser holds that this servant represents Israel, which has inherited the royal office (*Der königliche Knecht: eine traditionsgeschichtlich-exegetische Studie über die Ebed-Jahwe-Lieder bei Deuterojesaja* [FRLANT, n.s. 52; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1959] 18-31).

[31]See, *e.g.*, 1 Sa. 23:10; 2 Sa. 3:18; 7:5, 8, 20, 26; 24:10; 1 Ki. 3:6; 8:24, 26, 66; 11:13, 32, 34, 36, 38; 14:8; 2 Ki. 8:19; 19:34; 1 Ch. 17:4, 7; 17:7, 18, 24; 21:8; 2 Ch. 6:15, 16, 17, 42; Ps. 78:70; 89:3[4], 20[21]; 144:9; Je. 33:21, 22, 26; Ezk. 34:23, 24; 37:24, 25.

[32]See Midrash Tan*h*uma on Nu. 1:2. *Cf.* also Grogan, 'Isaiah', 16.

careers of both figures (42:9; 49:1 // 44:26ff.), the congruence between the presence of the Spirit upon the servant in 42:1 and the 'anointing' (משח) of Cyrus in 45:1, and the fact that both are 'called' (קרא) by Yahweh (42:6 // 45:4), 'chosen' (בחר) by Yahweh (49:7 // 42:1), and that Yahweh has 'taken [each] by the hand' (חזק Hiphil followed by בְּיָמִין/ בְּיָד; 42:6 // 45:1). Israel is the beneficiary of the liberating work of both Cyrus and the servant (42:7; 49:5f. // 45:4, 13), and God will enable both to succeed and to enjoy honour (42:4; 49:4f.; 50:7, 9; 52:12; 53:10, 12 // 44:28-45:5). Although these parallels do not constitute proof of identity, particularly in the light of the servant's explicit acknowledgement of Yahweh in 49:1-5 and 50:4-10 contrasted with the repeated assertion that Cyrus does not know Yahweh in 45:4f., nevertheless because Cyrus is clearly a royal figure, these parallels support a royal identity for the servant.[33] Accordingly, various scholars have argued in favour of identifying the servant of the songs with either Uzziah, Hezekiah, Josiah, Jehoiachin, Cyrus, Darius, or Zerubbabel, among others.[34]

Drawing attention to the evidences of royal imagery discussed above, the traditional messianic interpretation of the servant songs argues that the servant is the promised offspring of David mentioned in Isaiah 7, 9, and 11.[35] Helping to link these texts to the concerns of the servant songs is 55:3-5, which renews the promise of an 'everlasting covenant' (בְּרִית עוֹלָם; *cf.* 42:6; 49:8), namely 'my steadfast, sure love for David' (חַסְדֵי דָוִד הַנֶּאֱמָנִים). Just as the servant songs stress the international scope of the servant's ministry (42:1, 4, 6; 49:1, 6, 7; 52:15), in 55:4f. Yahweh asserts: 'I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See you shall call nations that you do

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[33]In spite of his significant role in Is. 44-45, Cyrus is nowhere called 'my servant' or 'servant' of the Lord, unlike Israel, who is so designated in the immediate context. Indeed, perhaps Cyrus is mentioned by name in 44:28; 45:1,13 to make clear that he is not the servant figure intended elsewhere.

[34]See North, *The Suffering Servant*, 39-42, 49, 56, 89. Watts combines several of these proposed identifications (*Isaiah 34-66*). In his view Cyrus is the 'servant' in 42:1ff., while Darius I is the 'servant' mentioned in 49:5ff., 52:13 and 53:11. On the other hand, the figure who suffers and dies in 52:14; 53:1, 3-10a, 12 refers to Zerubbabel, who also appears in 50:4-9.

[35]See, *e.g.*, D.H. Odendaal, *The Eschatological Expectation of Isaiah 40-66 with Special Reference to Israel and the Nations* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970) 129-35; E.J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah, Vol. III: Chapters XL-LXVI* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 110, n. 5; Grogan, 'Isaiah', 16-20. *Cf.* also P.D. Wegner, *An Examination of Kingship and Messianic Expectation in Isaiah 1-35* (MBS; Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1992).

not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you...'[36] This promise is reminiscent of David's confession in 2 Samuel 22:44f. Although it is sometimes suggested that 55:3-5 transfers the substance of Yahweh's covenant with David to the people as a whole, this is not clear, and it is not favoured by the emphasis on the permanence of that covenant in vs. 3 and the use of singular forms ('him', 'witness', 'leader', 'commander', 'you') throughout 55:4f.[37]

Against the traditional messianic interpretation, which looks to David as a source for the servant imagery in the songs, is the fact that apart from Isaiah 55 there is virtually a total absence of Davidic royal imagery throughout Isaiah 40-66, by contrast to what obtains in 1-39.[38] This absence may be explained by the historical reality of the subjugated state of exilic and post-exilic Israel, where one should hardly expect a promised deliverer to assume the profile of a king.[39] In any case, based on Israel's pre-exilic history, in which the monarchy arose only long after her deliverance from Egypt and settlement in the land (*cf.* Dt. 17:14), what was needed in the new reality would be not so much a new David as a new Moses or Joshua.

Furthermore, there are several specific difficulties with any attempt to identify the servant exclusively with a royal figure, whether that figure is understood as historical, ideal, or messianic. In particular, the earlier cited evidence for a prophetic role for the servant weighs against such a view—especially the emphasis on the gentle and sustaining effect of the servant's words (42:4f.; 50:4; *cf.* 49:2). If the servant were a king it would seem irrelevant to assert that 'he will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street' (42:2). In spite of its frequent attestation, 'teaching' (תּוֹרָה, 42:4) is nowhere else ascribed to kings. Likewise, there is no obvious suggestion of royalty in the servant's multiple calling to 'open eyes that are blind' (42:7), to 'sprinkle [יַזֶּה] the nations', if this is the correct rendering of 52:13, or to suffer and make himself as a 'guilt offering' (אָשָׁם) in 53:10, *etc.* The abuse that David accepted from Shimei *et al.* may offer a possible parallel to the willingness of the servant to give his back to the smiters in 50:6, but such behaviour is hardly characteristic of royalty. Finally, the description of the servant as 'the slave of rulers' (לְעֶבֶד מֹשְׁלִים) in

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[36]*Cf.* also 2:2-4; 51:4-5.
[37]See, *e.g.*, Kidner, 'Isaiah', 619.
[38]See W.J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1984) 190.
[39]It is possible that the stress elsewhere in Isaiah on Yahweh's kingship (6:5; 24:23; 33:22; 41:21; 43:15; 44:6; 52:7; 66:1; *etc.*) precludes a final kingly servant figure. *Cf.* R. Schultz, 'The King in the Book of Isaiah', in the present volume.

49:7 seems peculiar for any would-be scion of David.

(3) A Priestly Servant

Alternatively, some scholars have sought to do greater justice to the various priestly aspects of the servant's work by positing a reference to Jeremiah, who was both a priest and a prophet, to Ezekiel, who was also both a priest and a prophet, to Ezra, to Onias, or to some other contemporary priest.[40] The enhanced religious and civil leadership role of Israel's priesthood in the second temple period may add to the attractiveness of this approach. Certainly the term 'my servant' (עַבְדִּי, 42:1; 49:3) would be applicable to a priest in view of Zechariah 3:8, where Joshua the High Priest and his associates are said to prefigure 'my servant the Branch' (עַבְדִּי צֶמַח). Likewise, just as the servant is Yahweh's chosen (בחר) in 42:1; 49:7, Aaron is chosen (בחר) by Yahweh in Psalm 105:26 (*cf.* Dt. 18:5).

Other hints of the priestly identity of the servant include: the 'teaching/law' (תּוֹרָה) of the servant for which the coastlands wait (42:4; *cf.* Mal. 2:6-9); the 'justice' (מִשְׁפָּט) he is to establish (42:1, 3f.; *cf.* Dt. 17:9ff.; 2 Ki. 17:27; 2 Ch. 19:8); the mentioned 'reparation/guilt offering' (אָשָׁם) in 53:10; the fact that the servant 'sprinkles' (יַזֶּה) the nations in 52:15; and the servant's intecessory work in 53:12 (*cf.* Ps. 106:30; Je. 7:16).[41] Deserving special note is the fact that in 53:4-6 Israel's guilt appears to devolve on the servant in a manner which is similar to the experience of the priests when they eat the sin and guilt offerings of the people (*cf.* Lv. 10:17; Zc. 3).[42] In particular, the servant bears the punishment of the people in 53:4ff. in words that echo the experience of the prophet-priest Ezekiel in Ezekiel 4:4-6, and the servant's death effects atonement in 53:10-12 in a manner that is perhaps reminiscent of the symbolic expiatory consequence of the death of the High Priest in Numbers 35:25, 28, 32; Joshua 20:6.

For the purpose of the present study, it is enough to argue that even if all of these suggestions were equally convincing, they are not sufficient to identify the servant exclusively with a priestly figure. Some of these characteristics, such as the designations 'my servant' and 'chosen', are ambiguous in their implication. Other features, such

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[40]See, *e.g.*, North, *The Suffering Servant*, 20f., 39-41, 56f.; and M. Treves, 'Isaiah LIII', *VT* 24 (1974) 98-108.

[41]Elsewhere 'sprinkling' (נזה) is usually the work of a priest (*e.g.*, Ex. 29:21; Lv. 4:6, 17; 5:9; 14:7, 16, 27, 51; 16:14, 15, 19; Nu. 19:4, 18, 19).

[42]See especially N. Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering in the Priestly Literature* (JSOTS 56; Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1987).

as the recurrent themes of the rejection and suffering of the servant (42:4; 49:4, 7; 50:6-9; 53:3-12) or the exaltation of the servant (49:7; 52:13-15; 53:12), do not readily suggest a priestly figure. Finally, as has been noted, there are too many other features in the songs which point more naturally in the alternative directions of either a prophetic or a royal personage.

III. The Servant as a Second Moses

In the face of such contradictory results, one may despair of any solution to the identity of the servant from the standpoint of the original context. Indeed, the prophet may have drawn from such a rich diversity of sources for the composite picture he paints that any attempt to identify the servant figure is necessarily reductionistic.[43] Without diminishing that luxuriance of imagery, however, it is still possible that there is a dominant image, which underlies the servant figure and justifies exactly the kind of blending of prophetic, royal, and priestly features that is found. What is proposed here is that this dominant and unifying image is that of a second Moses figure. In other words, the servant is the 'prophet like Moses' promised in Deuteronomy 18:14ff. and 34:10ff.

This interpretation is not novel, even if it is not as well-known as it deserves to be. Probably the earliest expression of this view, or at least a variation thereof, is found in the Talmudic tractate *b. Soṭah* 14a.[44] Quoting Isaiah 53:12, Rabbi Simlai explains how Moses 'poured out himself to death' and 'bore the sin of many' when he offered his life, as related in Exodus 32:32, and atoned for his people after the golden calf incident. Simlai explains that Moses 'was numbered with the transgressors' because he was condemned to die along with the rest of the wilderness generation and that he 'made intercession for the

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[43]Clines suggests that the force of the poem in 52:13-53:12 may lie in its imprecision, concealment, and multivalence with respect to the identity of the servant figure (*I, He, We, and They*. 25-27, 33). Similar observations have been made by other scholars: they conclude that the songs are deliberately vague in order to point to a future fulfilment. See, *e.g.*, H.W. Wolff, 'Wer ist der Gottesknecht in Jesaja 53?', *Evangelische Theologie* 22 (1962) 338-42.

[44]It is possible that 11QMelch 18-25 associates the messenger in Is. 52:7, which it identifies as 'the Anointed of the Spirit', with the 'prophet like Moses'. *Cf.* N.A. Dahl, 'Messianic Ideas and the Crucifixion of Jesus', in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Messiah. Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 382-403, esp. 386.

transgressors' because he prayed for mercy on behalf of his fellow-Israelites. Whether Simlai considered that Isaiah was referring directly to Moses or merely inferred the applicability of Isaiah 53 to Moses because he detected an underlying Mosaic typology, this text demonstrates an early (third century AD, Amoraic) recognition of a Mosaic allusion within the servant songs.

Presumably under Talmudic influence, other Jewish interpreters have also recognised Mosaic allusions in Isaiah 53:12 and possibly 53:9-12, although they typically and somewhat inconsistently identify the servant elsewhere as a reference to Israel. For example, this is the view of David Kimchi (twelfth century AD); Yalqut 2:338 (thirteenth century AD); the Zohar, Section כי תצא (thirteenth century AD); Moses el-Shaikh (sixteenth century AD); and Sh'lomoh Levi (sixteenth century AD).[45]

Most recent interpreters who recognize Mosaic allusions within the servant songs tend to consider these to be more extensive than was appreciated by earlier scholars, and they also prefer a reference to a contemporary or anticipated second Moses, rather than to the historical Moses.[46] Vitiating these advances, however, have been three factors. First, there has been a tendency among certain influential scholars to recognize only sporadic Mosaic allusions among the servant songs and also to combine this recognition with one of the more controversial views discussed above. So, for example, J.L. McKenzie recognizes Mosaic allusions only in the first song, where the servant appears as 'another Moses'.[47] McKenzie suggests that the editor of Deutero-Isaiah believed the servant to be Deutero-Isaiah himself.[48] Since McKenzie holds that the songs were originally unre-

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[45]For these sources, see S.R. Driver and A. Neubauer, *The Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah according to the Jewish Interpreters* (repr; New York: Ktav, 1969) Vol. II, 10,15f., 56, 261, 270-74, 287-89.

[46]Among recent scholars who acknowledge Mosaic allusions in the servant songs and, in most cases, support a second Moses identity for the servant are: von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. II, 261f.; C. Chavasse, 'The Suffering Servant and Moses', *Church Quarterly Review* 165 (1964) 152-63; H. Blocher, *Songs of the Servant* (London: IVP, 1975); D. Michel, 'Deuterojesaja', *TRE* 8 (1981) 510-30, especially 521ff.; H. Schmid, *Die Gestalt des Mose: Probleme alttestamentlicher Forschung unter Berücksichtigung der Pentateuchkrise* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1986) 64f.; P.D. Miller, 'Moses My Servant. The Deuteronomic Portrait of Moses', *Interpretation* 41 (1987) 245-55, esp. 251-53; G.W. Coats, *The Moses Tradition* (JSOTS 161; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) 133-41; 182-89; D.C. Allison, Jr., *The New Moses. A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 68; and S. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel* (WUNT 81; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1995).

lated to their present contexts, however, he argues that the servant is better understood as a composite ideal figure who represents what post-exilic Israel must become.[49] R. Clifford's interpretation resembles McKenzie's in that he also considers that the servant represents (or ought to represent) post-exilic Israel.[50] By contrast to McKenzie, Clifford finds Mosaic allusions only in the second song. Other scholars, such as S. Mowinckel, emphasize the presence of Mosaic allusions only in the fourth song.[51]

A second factor that has contributed to the neglect of this potentially fruitful insight has been the tendency to confuse the recognition of Mosaic allusions throughout the songs with the rather implausible view of E. Sellin, which he later abandoned, but not before he had convinced Sigmund Freud.[52] Freud subsequently popularised the view in his *Moses and Monotheism*. On Sellin's view Moses was murdered by his own people after the Baal of Peor incident, and it was his death, not that of the obscure Zimri in Numbers 25, that stopped a plague. Sellin notes that the title 'servant of Yahweh', 'my servant', 'his servant', *etc.* is preeminently applied to Moses, and he is so called in 63:11 ('his servant'). As is the case with the servant in Isaiah, Numbers 12:3 stresses the exceptional meekness of Moses. If Exodus 15:25f. implies that Moses suffered a dread Egyptian disease, as Sellin supposes, then here is the background for the depiction in 53:2f. Finally, just as Moses' grave was hidden in the wilderness, so the servant's grave was with the wilderness 'he-goat demons', according to 53:9 (Sellin freely emends עָשִׁיר to שְׂעִרִים). C.R. North summarises

[47]J.L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 38; see also xliv, xlvii, liii. J. Ridderbos suggests that the prophet like Moses may have influenced the first servant song because he too appears as both a prophet and a lawgiver (*Isaiah* [ET; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984] 374)

[48]*Second Isaiah*, xli, xlii.

[49]*Ibid.*, lv.

[50]'Isaiah 40-66' 572, 580f.

[51]Although he identifies the servant with an unknown prophet, who lived sometime after Deutero-Isaiah, Mowinckel suggests that in the portrait of the servant the poet-prophet may have utilised the traditions of Moses' intercession and his readiness to die to appease the wrath of Yahweh. Such a procedure reflects the conviction that Moses was 'the pattern for all prophets' (*He That Cometh*, 232).

[52]E. Sellin, *Mose und seine Bedeutung für die israelitisch-jüdische Religionsgeschichte* (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1922); *idem*, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (ET of 3rd German ed; London and New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923) 143f.; *idem*, *Geschichte des israelitisch-jüdischen Volkes* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1924, 1932) Vol. I, 76ff.; Vol. II, 67f.; S. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* (ET; New York: Random House, 1967). *Cf.* North, *The Suffering Servant*, 53-55.

why Sellin's view proves to be unconvincing: 'none of these analogies, nor all of them together, constitutes proof of identification, and many of them would apply equally well to Jeremiah or Job.'[53]

The third factor causing modern scholarship to overlook the possibility that the servant is a second Moses figure is the practice since B. Duhm of prescinding the servant songs from their immediate context.[54] More recent scholarship, especially the work of T.N.D. Mettinger, has dealt a severe blow to this earlier consensus.[55] If it can be conceded now that the songs are, in fact, integral to their context, then it is that neglected context which may provide the most compelling evidence for the servant's Mosaic identity.[56]

1. Second Exodus

Although Isaiah 40-55 is extraordinarily rich in its complexity and multifaceted imagery, it is widely recognised that the controlling and sustained theme of these chs. is that of a second exodus.[57] While one should not neglect the importance of the second exodus theme already in chs. 1-39 (*e.g.*, 4:2-6; 10:24-26; 11:11, 15-16; 35:5-10) or its continuing prevalence in chs. 56-66 (*e.g.*, 58:8; 60:2, 19; 63), it is almost omnipresent in chs. 40-55, for which it provides an *inclusio* (40:1-11; 55:12-13).[58] With respect to these chapters which provide the immediate context for the servant songs, B.W. Anderson identifies at least ten texts which make explicit use of second exodus imagery: 40:3-5; 41:17-20; 42:14-16; 43:1-

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[53]North, *The Suffering Servant*, 55.

[54]B. Duhm, *Die Theologie der Propheten* (Bonn: A. Marcus, 1875); *idem*, *Das Buch Jesaja* (1892). Perhaps by force of scholarly habit, this tendency to minimise the canonical context for the servant songs may be observed even among interpreters who reject Duhm's claim for their independent authorship. *Cf.*, *e.g.*, Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 70f.

[55]T.N.D. Mettinger, *A Farewell to the Servant Songs: A Critical Examination of an Exegetical Axiom* (Lund: Gleerup, 1983). Other scholars who have emphasized the coherence of the songs with their contexts include: Muilenburg, 'The Book of Isaiah, Ch. 40-66'; Beuken, '*Mišpāṭ*: The First Servant Song and Its Canonical Context'; Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55* (1976); J. Scullion, *Isaiah 40-66* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1982); McKenzie, *Second Isaiah* (1968); Clifford, 'Isaiah 40-66' (1988) 571-96; H.G.M. Williamson, 'First and Last in Isaiah', in McKay and Clines (eds.), *Of Prophets' Visions and the Wisdom of Sages*, 95-108.

[56]Perhaps a fourth factor for the current neglect of the second Moses hypothesis is worth noting. North, in his classic *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah*, overlooks the second Moses hypothesis in his widely quoted preface in which he summarizes his nearly exhaustive survey of scholarly approaches to the servant's identity up to 1948. Many subsequent works have repeated this omission. *Cf.*, *e.g.*, Clines' otherwise useful survey of major approaches to the identity of the servant, which updates the work of North (*I, He, We, & They*, 25-27).

3, 14-21; 48:20-21; 49:8-12; 51:9-10; 52:11-12; 55:12-13.[59] There are other possible examples, including 42:13; 44:27; 54:3, 13. Since the prophet grounds the promise of the second exodus in the reality of the first (*cf.* 51:9f., *etc.*), references to the original exodus gain relevance and may be added here as well: 41:4, 9; 44:2, 7f.; 46:3f.; 48:8; 52:4.

To this impressive list one might also add references to the related themes of redemption, recreation, theophany, and pilgrimage/divine triumphal procession to God's holy mountain. While each of these can be viewed as an unrelated or even competing theme, several recent studies have demonstrated that all four are perhaps best understood as elaborations of the second exodus theme.[60] So, for example, 43:1f. provides a clear instance where the language of both

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[57]See, *e.g.*, von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. II, 239ff.; B.W. Anderson, 'Exodus Typology in Second Isaiah' in B.W. Anderson and W. Harrelson (eds.), *Israel's Prophetic Heritage* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1962) 177-95; *idem*, 'Exodus and Covenant in Second Isaiah and Prophetic Tradition', in F.M. Cross *et al.* (eds.), *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976) 339-60; J. Blenkinsopp, 'Scope and Depth of the Exodus Tradition in Deutero-Isaiah, 40-55', *Concilium* 20 (1966) 41-50; C. Stuhlmueller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah* (Analecta Biblica 43; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1970) ch. 4; D. Baltzer, *Ezechiel und Deuterojesaja* (BZAW 121; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971) 1-26; J.D.W. Watts, 'Excursus: Exodus Typology', in *Isaiah 34-66* (1987) 80f.; H.M. Barstad, *A Way in the Wilderness. The 'Second Exodus' in the Message of Second Isaiah* (JSSM 12; Manchester: University of Manchester, 1989).

[58]There is no need to dismiss second exodus allusions within chs. 1-39 as intrusive, as does Anderson ('Exodus and Covenant', 359, n. 26). The use of exodus imagery as a model for redemption is hardly confined to Is. 40ff. *Cf.*, *e.g.*, Ho. 2:14f.[16f.]; Mi. 7:14f.; Je. 16:14f.; 23:7f.; Ezk. 20; *etc.*

[59]'Exodus and Covenant', 339-60.

[60]For Isaiah's use of redemption imagery and its coherence with the second exodus theme, see, *e.g.*, F. Holmgren, *With Wings As Eagles: Isaiah 40-55, An Interpretation* (Chappaqua, NY: Biblical Scholars Press, 1973) 71-96; W.C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978) 214; and Watts, 'Excursus: גאל "Redeem"', in *Isaiah 34-66*, 106f.

For Isaiah's use of creation imagery, see von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. II, 241; Stuhlmueller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah*; Watts, 'Excursus: ברא "Create"/"Creator"', in *Isaiah 34-66*, 93f.; Clifford, 'Isaiah 40-66', 582.

For Isaiah's use of theophany imagery, *cf.* D.A. Patrick, 'Epiphanic Imagery in Second Isaiah's Portrayal of a New Exodus', in R. Ahroni (ed.), *Hebrew Annual Review Volume 8, 1984: Biblical and Other Studies in honor of Sheldon H. Blank* (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1985) 125-41.

Finally, for Isaiah's use of pilgrimage/triumphal procession imagery, see von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. II, 239; Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 168; E.H. Merrill, 'Pilgrimage and Procession: Motifs of Israel's Return', in A. Gileadi (ed.), *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988) 261-72.

creation and redemption appears in the context of second exodus imagery:

> But now thus says Yahweh, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you...(*cf.* 51:9-11).

Other texts which employ creation themes for the second exodus image include 43:1, 15; 55:12f., *etc.* Finally, a passage such as 51:9-11 demonstrates that the second exodus was to reflect the pattern of the original in a pilgrimage/triumphal procession to God's holy mountain (*cf.* 41:17-20; 42:14-17; 43:1-7; 52:7-12; 56:6-8; 57:14; 60:4-7; 62:10; 66:20-23).

Of course, the attraction and relevance of second exodus imagery for the prophet's use are transparent. God promises to deliver his people, who are dispersed among the nations, from their oppression and to return them to the Promised Land. From the vantage point of their captivity the people recognised, according to 63:11-15, that a new exodus was precisely what was needed.

(1) The reapplication, with appropriate escalation, of many of the details of the original exodus to the second exodus

It is necessary to stress that the prophet's application of the second exodus theme is not restricted to the central facts of the divine rescue of a needy people, redemption, recreation, triumphal procession, *etc.* Rather, a host of ancillary details connected with the original exodus are reapplied, with appropriate escalation, to the second exodus. For example, just as there is repeated stress on the sovereign predictive word of Yahweh that determined the outcome of the original exodus (Gn. 15:13f.; 50:24; Ex. 3:12, 17; 6:6f.; *etc.*), so also there is corresponding emphasis on the sovereign predictive word of Yahweh with respect to the second exodus (44:6-8; *cf.* 41:22f., 26; 42:9; 43:9, 18; 44:25ff.; 45:21; 46:9-11; 48:3-6, 14). Indeed, in light of 43:18 it seems likely that the 'former things' (הָרִאשֹׁנוֹת) in 41:22; 42:9; 43:9; 46:9; 48:3 (*cf.* 44:7; 65:17), which were predicted long ago, refer preeminently to the exodus redemption.[61] Accordingly, the 'new thing(s)' (חֲדָשׁוֹת/חֲדָשָׁה, 42:9;

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[61]*Cf.* A. Bentzen, 'On the Idea of "the Old" and "the New" in Deutero-Isaiah', *Studia Theologica* 1 (1947) 185; von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. II, 247; Anderson, 'Exodus Typology in Second Isaiah', 187f.

43:19; 48:6; *cf.* 41:23), which Yahweh is now revealing through his prophet, must be viewed as a reference to the new exodus. Moreover, since Yahweh personally led Israel out of Egypt and provided light for their way, once again Yahweh will personally lead his people and turn their darkness into light (42:16; 52:12). As the original exodus was intended to draw God's people into a covenant with himself, so also this second exodus will result in an 'everlasting covenant' according to 61:8 (*cf.* 42:6; 49:8; 59:21).[62] Since the original exodus resulted in Israel's calling to be a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6) and the subsequent establishment of the Levitical priesthood (Ex. 32:29), so this new exodus will issue in a renewed calling to be 'priests of Yahweh' (61:6) and a surprising new selection of priests and Levites: 'And I will also take some of them [of Tarshish, Lybia, Lydia, Tubal, and Greece] as priests and as Levites, says Yahweh' (66:21). Furthermore, as Isaiah 48:20f. makes clear, because Yahweh miraculously provided water for his people in the original exodus, a similar provision is assured for the second exodus:

> Go out from Babylon, flee from Chaldea, declare this with a shout of joy, proclaim it, send it forth to the end of the earth; say, 'Yahweh has redeemed his servant Jacob!' They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts; he made water flow for them from the rock; he split open the rock and the water gushed out.

Though not all equally convincing, similar examples are easily multiplied.

(2) Cyrus as a second Pharaoh

One further example that is especially intriguing concerns the account of Cyrus in 44:28-45:13 (*cf.* 41:1-7). As was noted above, there are numerous parallels between Cyrus and the servant. While an identification between these figures was rejected, it remains possible that the prophet intended these parallels to point to the servant figure as the one who would complete the deliverance of Israel begun by Cyrus at a more limited topological (material) level. Here it is only necessary to add that in terms of the overarching second exodus theme, which is very much in evidence in the immediate context (44:25, 27; 45:2, 7; *etc.*), there are many details in the portrait of Cyrus

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[62]In 55:3 the reference to the 'everlasting covenant' suggests the fluidity of images in Isaiah whereby the poet-prophet easily melds Davidic imagery with exodus imagery.

that recall Pharaoh. Accordingly Cyrus may be intended not only as a partial prefigurement of, but also as a foil for the servant who would come as the new Moses.[63]

In particular, in Exodus 5:2 Pharaoh objects to Moses' request to allow Israel to leave: 'I do [לֹא יָדַעְתִּי] not know Yahweh.' Echoing this response of Pharaoh, but in sharp contrast to the servant (Is. 49:1-5; 50:4-10), twice it is said of Cyrus that he 'does not know Yahweh' (וְלֹא יְדַעְתָּנִי, Is. 45:4, 5; *cf.* 19:21). Nevertheless, in Exodus 7:5 Yahweh reveals that he will deliver his people so that 'The Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh' (וְיָדְעוּ... כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה; *cf.* Ex. 7:17; 8:10[6]; 14:18; *etc.*). This same ultimate purpose is reiterated with respect to Yahweh's dealings with Cyrus in Isaiah 45:3: '...so that you may know that I am Yahweh' (לְמַעַן תֵּדַע כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה).

There is an obvious general similarity between Pharaoh and Cyrus as leaders of non-Israelite nations which ruled over Israel. Moreover, both Exodus and Isaiah stress that these leaders were raised up to fulfil their role in regard to Israel so that Yahweh would gain universal glory (note the similarity between Exodus 9:16 and Isaiah 45:4-5). Furthermore, just as Yahweh overcame the wise men (חֲכָמִים) of Egypt (Ex. 7:11), this glorious deliverance exemplifies the power of Yahweh, 'who foils the signs of false prophets and makes fools of diviners, who overthrows the wise [חֲכָמִים]...' (Is. 44:25). Finally, forced by Yahweh and without any compensation, Pharaoh does let the captive people of Israel go free (שׁלח, Piel, Ex. 3:20; 6:1; 14:5; *etc.*). Similarly Isaiah 45:13 declares, 'I have aroused Cyrus in righteousness, and I will make all his paths straight; he shall build my city and set my exiles free [שׁלח, Piel], not for price or reward, says Yahweh of hosts.'

(3) Second exodus imagery in the context of the first servant song (Isaiah 42:1-4 [9])

Second exodus imagery is evident in the immediate context of each of the servant songs. Prior to the first servant song, for instance, exodus imagery appears in 41:17-20, where Yahweh promises to provide the poor with water in the wilderness and an abundance of welcome shade trees (*cf.* Ex. 15:27; 17:1-7; Nu. 20:1-13). Exodus imagery resumes in 42:13-16, where Yahweh promises to go forth as a 'man of war'

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[63]Stressing the prevalence of the new exodus theme in Deutero-Isaiah, G.S. Ogden wonders whether Cyrus is a 'new Moses' ('Moses and Cyrus', *VT* 28 [1978] 195-203). Although Ogden discusses five points where the Cyrus Song (44:24-45:13) suggests literary dependence on the early chapters of Exodus, none of these requires the proposed identification of Cyrus as a Moses figure.

(אִישׁ מִלְחָמוֹת) to triumph over his enemies (*cf.* 'man of war' [אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה] in Ex. 15:3), to dry up rivers (Ex. 14:16-29), to lead his blind people along unfamiliar paths, and to turn darkness into light (*cf.* Ex. 13:21f.).

Further, in 42:6f. the servant's work to 'bring out the prisoners' (יצא, Hiphil, followed by אַסִּיר) from the 'house of confinement' (מִבֵּית כֶּלֶא) may echo the exodus where Yahweh 'leads out the prisoners' (יצא, Hiphil, followed by אַסִּיר, Ps. 68:6[7]) when he 'brought out Israel' from the 'house of bondage' (יצא, Hiphil, followed by מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים, Ex. 13:3, 14; 20:2; Dt. 5:6; 6:12; 7:8; 8:14; 13:5,10; *etc.*).[64]

(4) Second exodus imagery in the context of the second servant song (Isaiah 49:1-6 [13])[65]

The verses which immediately precede the second servant song, namely 48:20-22, likewise offer an example of second exodus imagery. The text begins in 48:20a with a command to the people: 'Go out from Babylon, flee from Chaldea' (*cf.* Ex. 11:8; 12:31; 14:5). A triumphant proclamation of redemption in 48:20b (*cf., e.g.,* Ex. 6:6; 15:13) is then followed in verse 21 by an unmistakable allusion to the original exodus: 'They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts; he made water flow for them from the rock; he split open the rock and the water gushed out.' The verses which immediately follow the second servant song, namely 49:8-12, similarly speak of 'a day of salvation' when the land will be reapportioned (Nu. 32:33; Jos. 13:8, 15ff., 32ff.) and the imprisoned people will be commanded to 'come out' (*cf.* Ex. 11:8; 12:31). An exodus allusion is transparent in the promise that

> They shall feed along the ways, on all the bare heights shall be their pasture; they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them down, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them (49:9b-10; *cf.* Ex. 15:27; 16:4ff.; 17:6; *etc.*).

(5) Second exodus imagery in the context of the third servant song (Isaiah 50:4-9 [11])

The third servant song also is immediately preceded by a reference to the original exodus:

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[64]*Cf.* Chavasse, 'The Suffering Servant and Moses', 157.

[65]In support of a second Moses identity for the servant in the second song, *cf.* Bentzen, *King and Messiah*, 66; G. Vermes, 'Die Gestalt des Moses an der Wende der beiden Testaments', in R. Bloch and G. Vermes (eds.), *Moses in Schrift und Überlieferung* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1963) 61-93, esp. 80.

> ...Is my hand shortened, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? By my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a desert; their fish stink for lack of water, and die of thirst. I clothe the heavens with blackness, and make sackcloth their covering. (50:2f.)

The same logic reappears in 51:9-11, where the prophet again recalls the original exodus as a basis for assurance that Yahweh is entirely able to restore his ransomed people to Zion.

(6) Second exodus imagery in the context of the fourth servant song (Isaiah 52:13-53:12)

In 52:2-4 there is an allusion to the exodus and especially Israel's sojourn in Egypt, which is compared to the Assyrian captivity of the northern tribes:

> Shake yourself from the dust, rise up, O captive Jerusalem; loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter Zion! For thus says Yahweh: You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money. For thus says the Lord Yahweh: Long ago, my people went down into Egypt to reside there as aliens; the Assyrian, too, has oppressed them without cause.

As elsewhere, this historical review serves as an assurance that Yahweh will once again redeem his people who 'are taken away without cause' (52:5). Second exodus imagery resumes in the three verses which immediately precede the fourth song:

> Yahweh has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations [*cf.* Ex. 6:6; 15:16; Nu. 14:13; Dt. 1:30-33; 4:34]; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of it, purify yourselves, you who carry the vessels of Yahweh. For you shall not go out in haste, and you shall not go in flight; for Yahweh will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard. (52:10-12)

As at the original exodus (Ex. 19:14), here also the Israelites are commanded to purify themselves. Once more 'Yahweh will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard' (*cf.* Ex. 13:21f.; 14:19-20). This time, however, the people will leave in serenity with Yahweh going before them: 'For you shall not go out in haste [בְּחִפָּזוֹן], and you shall not go in flight.'[66] Contrast Exodus 12:11 and Deuteronomy 16:3. Indeed, the term 'haste' (חִפָּזוֹן) appears nowhere else outside these three texts.

2. Second Moses

As noted by G. von Rad, the prominence of the second exodus theme in Deutero-Isaiah invites, if it does not demand, an identification of the servant of the Lord with a second Moses figure.[67] Isaiah 63:11-19 offers important evidence for this association. In their desperation, the people cry out for a new exodus and with it, at least implicitly, a new Moses:

> Then they remembered the days of old, of Moses, his servant. Where is the one who brought them up out of the sea...? Where is the one who put within them his holy spirit, who caused his glorious arm to march at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them...?

The servant songs yield abundant confirmatory evidence for the identification of the servant figure as the long awaited 'prophet like Moses'.

(1) Apart from David, no individual is more frequently identified as the 'servant' (עֶבֶד) of the Lord than Moses. This appellation is applied to him forty times. Specifically, eighteen out of the twentythree occurrences of 'the servant of Yahweh' (עֶבֶד יְהוָה)[68] and all four of the occurrences of 'the servant of God' (עֶבֶד הָאֱלֹהִים)[69] are applied to Moses. In addition, with reference to God he is designated six times each as 'his servant' (עַבְדּוֹ),[70] 'my servant' (עַבְדִּי),[71] and 'your servant' (עַבְדְּךָ).[72] What makes this designation particularly characteristic of Moses is Numbers 12:6-8, where Yahweh twice distinguishes Moses as 'my servant' over against those who were merely prophets.

(2) Second, all the evidence cited earlier for the royal, priestly, and especially prophetic characteristics of the servant figure is easily

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[66]See also 58:8. Orlinsky uses the second exodus theme which begins in Is. 51 to argue that 52:13-14 belongs to what precedes and so should be detached from 53:1-12 ('The So-Called "Servant of the Lord"', 21-22). See earlier discussion against this proposal. Providing additional evidence for the coherence of the fourth song with its context, Melugin notes the repetition of the 'arm' (זְרוֹעַ) of the Lord in 51:5, 9; 52:10; 53:1 and of the verb 'to see' (ראה) in 49:7; 52:10, 15 (*The Formation of Isaiah 40-55*, 168).

[67]*Old Testament Theology*, Vol. II, 261.

[68]Dt. 34:5; Jos. 1:1, 13, 15; 8:31, 33; 11:12; 12:6 (twice); 13:8; 14:7; 18:7; 22:2, 4, 5; 2 Ki. 18:12; 2 Ch. 1:3; 24:6. The five remaining occurrences are Jos. 24:29; Judg. 2:8; Is. 42:19; and the headings to Ps. 18 [Heb. 18:1] and Ps. 36 [Heb. 36:1].

[69]1 Ch. 6:49 [34]; 2 Ch. 24:9; Ne. 10:29 [30]; Dn. 9:11.

[70]Ex. 14:31; Jos. 9:24; 11:15; 1 Ki. 8:56; Is. 63:11 (see *BHS* note); Ps. 105:26.

[71]Nu. 12:7, 8; Jos. 1:2, 7; 2 Ki. 21:8; Mal. 4:4 [3:22].

[72]Ex. 4:10; Nu. 11:11; 1 Ki. 8:53; Neh. 1:7, 8; 9:14.

accommodated if the figure is understood as a reference to the promised 'prophet like Moses' mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:14ff. and 34:10ff.[73] Indeed, it is arguable that only on the assumption of a Moses-like figure, in whom these disparate offices cohere, can justice be done to this rich diversity of imagery. Though enjoying more privileged revelation than the prophets (*cf.* Nu. 12:6-8), Moses clearly functioned as a prophet and is identified as such in Deuteronomy 34:10, 'Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom Yahweh knew face to face' (*cf.* Dt. 18:15, 18).

On the other hand, Moses functioned as a priest in his holiness and mediatorial access to God within the tabernacle (Ex. 33:9; 40:31; *etc.*; *cf.* Nu. 16), his ministry of intercession and making atonement (Ex. 32:30; Nu. 14:5; *etc.*), his involvement in sacrifice and blood manipulation (Ex. 24:6-8; Lv. 8), and his blessing of the people (Ex. 39:43; Lv. 9:23; Dt. 33:1). See also Psalm 99:6, 'Moses and Aaron were among his priests, Samuel also was among those who called on his name. They cried to Yahweh, and he answered them.'

Even though Moses was not a king, he exercised royal (*i.e.*, preeminent civil) authority over the people as their divinely appointed ruler (*cf.* Ex. 2:14). He led the people, directed them in battle, judged them, and appointed commanders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, who assisted him in administering justice (Ex. 18; Nu. 11; Dt. 1).[74] Agreeably, when Moses asked Yahweh to appoint his successor, the job description was hardly distinguishable from that of a king:

> Let Yahweh, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint someone over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of Yahweh may not be like sheep without a shepherd (Nu. 27:16f.; *cf. e.g.*, 1 Ki. 3:7).

(3) An identification of the servant with a second Moses figure provides a ready solution for the problem of the corporate vs.

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[73]So, for example, C. Westermann notes the royal features of the servant in 42:1 and his prophetic features in 42:2-4. Westermann suggests that the designation 'servant' may have been chosen precisely to allow a melding of these traits in a single individual, much as had been the case with Moses, who is often called 'servant' (*Isaiah 40-66* [ET; London: SCM, 1969] 97). Surprisingly, Westermann does not develop this insight.

[74]According to Solomon's prayer in 1 Ki. 3:9 the preeminent responsibility of a king is to judge the people (לִשְׁפֹּט אֶת־עַמְּךָ), the very expression that is used of Moses in Ex. 18:13.

individual identity of the servant figure. At Israel's own request, Moses was the representative of his people (Ex. 20:18-19). Furthermore, not only was Moses' life exemplary in terms of faith and obedience, but also it provided a pattern for Israel's experience: his calling was in large measure theirs. So, for example, Moses was rescued from certain death at the hand of the Egyptians through a water ordeal in Exodus 2:1-10. The mention of 'reeds' (סוּף) in Exodus 2:3, 5 may provide a verbal link to 'the sea of reeds' (יַם־סוּף) in Exodus 15:4, *etc.* Likewise, Moses' flight from Egypt and from the murderous intention of the Pharaoh (Ex. 2:15) prefigures the later flight of Israel. Similarly, his experience of the fire theophany in the bush (סְנֶה) at Horeb in Exodus 3, where Yahweh promises his presence with Moses and reveals his name, seems to anticipate the subsequent fire theophany at Sinai (סִינַי) for all Israel in Exodus 19f. (*cf.* Ex. 3:12). In other words, the relationship between Moses and Israel is analogous to the relationship between the servant and Israel posited above. The servant is the representative of and model for his people: they share a common calling to be the servant of Yahweh, a light to the nations, *etc.*

(4) Two appellations in the servant songs besides the term 'servant' are at least consistent with, if they do not support, the proposed second Moses identification. The first is the term 'my chosen' (בְּחִירִי) in 42:1; Moses is called 'his chosen' (בְּחִירוֹ) in Psalm 106:23. The second is the term 'Israel' found in 49:3: 'He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendour."' While Moses is never called 'Israel', on three occasions he would have been so called had Yahweh prevailed in his expressed wish. The first of these was immediately after the golden calf incident in Exodus 32:9f.:

> Yahweh said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation.'

Employing the vocabulary of the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12:2 (*cf.* 17:20; 18:18; 21:18), which was reapplied to Jacob/Israel in Genesis 46:3, Yahweh promised Moses that he would now become the sole heir of that covenant: he would be the new Israel. The same result was threatened on two other occasions: at Kadesh Barnea (*cf.* Nu. 14:12, 'I will strike them with pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they') and, with less specificity, in the aftermath of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (*cf.* Nu. 16:20ff.).

(5) The enduing with God's spirit mentioned in 42:1 may find its source in the emphasis on Moses' possession of the spirit in Numbers 11:17ff. Similarly, there may be a Mosaic allusion in 61:1-7, where the prophet employs the vocabulary of the Jubilee year of release found in Leviticus 25:10 (*cf.* Je. 34:8, 15, 17; Ezk. 46:17).[75] This in turn may have been patterned after Israel's own experience of manumission from Egyptian slavery, which may account for such an incidental verbal parallel as the use of the יֹבֵל horn in Exodus 19:13, as in Leviticus 25 and 27.

(6) The servant's calling to establish 'justice' (מִשְׁפָּט), which is repeated in 42:1, 3, 4, and which is paralleled with the promise that 'the coastlands wait for his law' (לְתוֹרָתוֹ) in 42:4, suitably escalates in its universal application the work of the original Moses, who established justice (מִשְׁפָּט) and law (תּוֹרָה) for Israel (*cf.* Ex. 18; 21:1; 24:3; Nu. 11; 27:5; Dt. 1; 4:1, 13; 7:11f.; 10:4). Like Isaiah's servant, Moses was more than a prophet; he was a lawgiver. Of course, in the original exodus there was already an incipient universalism in that the law was to be applied to resident non-Israelites without discrimination (Ex. 12:49; Lv. 24:22; Nu. 15:16, 29) and was destined to impress the nations (Dt. 4:8). Indeed, the onlooking nations were a major concern for Moses in his intercession on behalf of the refractory Israel: he feared that the nations might misconstrue Yahweh's wrath against his people as evidence of inability to keep his promise (Ex. 32:12; 33:16; Nu. 14:13-16). Moreover, according to Exodus 12:38, the beneficiaries of the original exodus, hence recipients of Moses' teaching, included representatives from non-Israelite ethnic groups: 'A mixed crowd [עֵרֶב רַב] also went up with them' (*cf.* Nu. 11:4).[76] Confirming this fact is the subsequent presence of foreign elements apparently engrafted into Israel, such as Kenizzites (Nu. 32:12; Jos. 15:13), Midianites (Nu. 10:29ff.; *cf.* the Kenites mentioned in Judg. 1:16; 4:11), and even a half-Egyptian (Lv. 24:10).

[75]Significantly, 11QMelch begins by combining citations of Lv. 25:13 and Dt. 15:2, which it applies to the last days by means of a reference to Is. 61:1. Is. 61:1-7 appears to be correlated with the servant songs; indeed, as argued by W. Zimmerli, among others, it may provide the earliest evidence for an interpretation of the servant as an individual ('παῖς θεοῦ', *TDNT* 5:666, n. 67). Just as both the servant and the messenger have the spirit upon them for their work, their mission and message appear similar. See 42:7 and 49:9. Compare also 'the year of favour' (שְׁנַת־רָצוֹן) in 61:2 with 'the time of favour' (עֵת רָצוֹן) in 49:8.

[76]*Cf.* the promises to the patriarchs that all peoples would be blessed through them and through their seed (*e.g.*, Gn. 12:3; 22:18), that they would become 'a company of nations' (Gn. 35:11f.; 48:4), *etc.*

Furthermore, although other backgrounds for the 'light for the nations' calling in 42:7 (and 49:6) are possible, an intriguing option is to relate this promise of figurative illumination to the account in Exodus 34:29-35, where Moses' face literally shone as he shared the law of Yahweh with the people (*cf.* 42:16). In support, 60:1-3 identifies the light with the glory of Yahweh.[77]

(7) Although the call narrative in 49:1ff. offers significant parallels to Jeremiah 1:4-10, it is widely recognised that the narrative in Jeremiah is itself based on the call of Moses.[78] More particularly, the servant's objection to his call and sense of futility in 49:4, as well as his unpromising origin in 53:1f., find a plausible antecedent in the complaint of the self-doubting Moses in Exodus 3:11, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?'[79] Likewise, the theme of meekness in the servant's demeanour and proclamation in 42:2-3a may echo Moses' unimpressive, at least by his own estimate, locution (*cf.* Ex. 4:10; 6:12, 30; *cf.* Nu. 12:3). On the other hand, the countervailing acknowledgement that Yahweh fashioned the servant for this purpose (49:1, 5), that he made his mouth (49:2), that he instructs the servant's tongue and wakens his ear (50:4-5) appear to echo the divine response to Moses in Exodus 4:11f.: 'Who gives speech to mortals? Who makes them mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, Yahweh? Now go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak.'

(8) In 42:6 and 49:8 Yahweh makes the remarkable assertion to his servant, 'I have given you as a covenant for the people' (וְאֶתֶּנְךָ לִבְרִית עָם). Two features of this expression have vexed interpreters. First, since the phrase בְּרִית עָם (literally 'a covenant of people') is found nowhere else in the Old Testament, the implication of the construct is unclear. In 42:6 the parallel between לִבְרִית עָם and לְאוֹר גּוֹיִם ('to be a light for [the benefit of] the nations'), however, favours the rendering 'to be a covenant for [the benefit of] the people'. The second difficulty concerns the relationship of לִבְרִית עָם to the preced-

[77]Though note 51:4, '... my justice for a light to the peoples.' Although he identifies the servant with Israel, Sh'lomoh Astruc suggests that the radiance of the servant's countenance in Is. 52:14 recalls and exceeds that of Moses in Ex. 34:30 (Driver and Neubauer, *The Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Interpreters*, Vol. II: 130).

[78]W.L Holladay, 'The Background of Jeremiah's Self-Understanding', *JBL* 83 (1964) 153-64; *idem*, 'Jeremiah and Moses: Further Observations', *JBL* 85 (1966) 17-26; J.A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 148; Clifford, 'Isaiah 40-66', 580.

[79]*Cf.* Ex. 3:13; 4:1; *etc.*

ing וְאֶתֶּנְךָ ('I have given you'). Based on the semantic proximity of אָלָה ('curse') to בְּרִית ('covenant'), P.J. Naylor argues that נָתַן לִבְרִית ('to give/present as a covenant') should be understood as an example of emphatic metonymy, as is the case with the parallel syntagm נָתַן לְאָלָה ('to give/present as a curse') in Numbers 5:21; Jeremiah 29:18; 42:18; and 44:12.[80] Accordingly, as the cursed woman in Numbers 5:21 was an embodiment of that curse, so the servant of Yahweh in Isaiah 'constitutes the embodiment, and personal existentialisation, of all that the covenant entailed.'[81]

Although the expression 'to give/present as a covenant' is nowhere used of the original Moses, it seems entirely apt to describe one whose role is modelled on Moses as the mediator of the covenant at Sinai (Ex. 24; 25:22).[82] To obey Moses was to obey the covenant (Ex. 20:19; *cf.* 16:8; 17:2). Faith in Moses was commensurate with faith in the Lord of the covenant (Ex. 14:31; 19:9). On the other hand, Moses is so thoroughly identified with the people that in Exodus 34:27 the covenant was deemed to have been made with Moses, whether in addition to Israel or, more likely, as their representative: 'Yahweh said to Moses: Write these words; in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and [or perhaps, 'that is'] with Israel' (כָּרַתִּי אִתְּךָ בְּרִית וְאֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל).[83]

A more specific allusion to Moses' work as the mediator of the Sinaitic covenant may be intended by the statement in 52:15, if the MT is retained: '...so he will sprinkle many nations' (כֵּן יַזֶּה גּוֹיִם רַבִּים).[84] Moses was directed to sprinkle (זרק) the altar with blood in connection with the consecration of Aaron and his sons (Ex. 29:16, 20; Lv. 8:19, 24).[85] He also sprinkled (נזה) Aaron and his sons with blood and oil

[80]P.J. Naylor, 'The Language of Covenant. A Structural Analysis of the Semantic Field of ברית in Biblical Hebrew, with Particular Reference to the Book of Genesis' (D.Phil. diss., Oxford University, 1980) 380-95.

[81]'The Language of Covenant', 394. *Cf.* also Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 193.

[82]McKenzie explains: 'The Servant is called a covenant; the force of the figure means that the Servant mediates between Yahweh and peoples, that the Servant becomes a bond of union' (*Second Isaiah*, 40). *Cf.* also A. Gelin, 'Moses im Alten Testament', in Bloch and Vermes (eds.), *Moses in Schrift und Überlieferung*, 31-57, esp. 55.

[83]*Cf.* Ex. 34:10f.

[84]Although the MT יַזֶּה, 'he will sprinkle', is supported by 1QIsa[a], 1QIsa[b], and the Targum (יבדר, 'he will scatter'), various implausible emendations have been proposed based on the LXX reading οὕτως θαυμάσονται ἔθνη πολλὰ ἐπ' αὐτῷ ('many nations shall be amazed at him').

[85]Nu. 19:19f. demonstrates the synonymy of נזה, 'sprinkle', and זרק, 'sprinkle' or 'dash', in these contexts.

(Ex. 29:21; Lv. 8:30) and the Levites with water in order to consecrate them for their ministries (Nu. 8:7). In Exodus 24, however, Moses sprinkled not just select individuals, but the entire people: 'Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people [וַיִּזְרֹק עַל־הָעָם], and said, "See the blood of the covenant that Yahweh has made with you in accordance with all these words"' (Ex. 24:8). Perhaps Isaiah 52:15 alludes to this.

9) The recurrent themes of the servant's rejection by the people, his suffering, and his submissive response to opposition have obvious relevance for a second Moses figure if his experience is to parallel that of the original Moses. While the difficulties faced by the servant in 42:4 and 49:4 are unspecified, 49:7 refers to the servant as one who is '...deeply despised, abhorred by the nation'. In 50:6 this rejection and the servant's submissive response become even more explicit: 'I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.' It is unlikely that this text refers to merely private acts of opposition and insult. Striking and depilation of one's beard are well-attested criminal sanctions in the ancient Near East (Ne. 13:25; *cf., e.g., MAL* A §§18, 19). Insult and spitting are likewise found in legal contexts, though they are not restricted to such contexts (Dt. 25:9; Mk. 10:34). The following verses (50:8f.), however, imply that in the present case there is a legal charge against the servant which requires divine adjudication.

These themes of rejection, suffering, and the servant's submissive response are highlighted throughout the fourth servant song:

> He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity... He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. (53:3-8)

The experience of Moses is apposite; he was characteristically rejected and disdained by those to whom he was sent (Ex. 2:14; 4:1; 15:24; 16:2-12; 17:2f.; Nu. 12:1ff.; 14:2; 16:2ff.; 16:41f.; 20:2f.; 21:5; 26:9). Israel not only complained and rebelled against Moses, but also brought legal charges against him (*cf.* the use of רִיב ['lawsuit'] in Ex. 17:2 and Nu. 20:3) and, on at least one occasion, threatened judicial execution by stoning (Ex. 17:3f.; *cf.* Nu. 14:10).[86] Such actions demanded and receiv-

ed divine vindication of the servant (*cf.* Nu. 16). On the other hand, resembling the servant in Isaiah (42:2-3; 50:5-6; 53:3-4, 7), Moses is described in Numbers 12:3 as 'very humble [עָנָו מְאֹד], more so than anyone else on the face of the earth'. From the context in Numbers, Moses is thus depicted because he was characteristically silent before his detractors; he resisted defending himself, leaving his vindication with Yahweh (*cf.* Ex. 15:24f.; 16:3f.; Nu. 16:41f.; 20:2-6; 21:5). Moreover, on at least two occasions Moses fell face down before his accusers, perhaps thereby giving his back to those who would strike him (Nu. 14:5; 16:4; see Is. 50:6).[87]

The mentioned 'grave with the wicked' in Isaiah 53:9 may continue the themes of rejection and the apparent miscarriage of justice that was the immediate cause of the servant's sufferings and death: 'They made his grave with the wicked... although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.' Alternatively, it may recall Moses' burial site in the wilderness, the place in which an entire generation of disobedient Israelites was condemned to die (Nu. 26:65; 32:13; Dt. 4:21f.; *etc.*; *cf. b. Soṭah* 14a).

10) Isaiah 53:12 concludes the fourth servant song: '...yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.' Consistent with the view that Isaiah's servant refers to the expected second Moses, Psalm 99:6, quoted above, highlights Moses' ministry of intercession as a prominent aspect of his priestly calling. A similar point is made in Jeremiah 15:1, 'Then Yahweh said to me: Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not turn toward this people...' See also Psalm 106:23. The Pentateuch supports this assessment with repeated references to Moses' intercessory prayer, at first offered on behalf of the Egyptians (Ex. 8:8f., 29f.; 9:33; 10:18) and later offered on behalf of his own undeserving people (Ex. 32:11ff.; Nu. 11:2; 12:11; 14:5; 16:4; 20:6; 21:7; Dt. 9:18-29).[88]

11) In 53:5 the healing that comes through the servant ('by his bruises we are healed') may also support a second Moses theme.[89] The

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[86]It is possible that 53:8a (*cf.* also 53:9) implies that the servant was a victim of a miscarriage of justice: 'By oppression and judgement he was taken away' (מֵעֹצֶר וּמִמִּשְׁפָּט לֻקָּח). This expression may be rendered 'After arrest and sentence he was taken away.' *Cf.* Blocher, *Songs of the Servant*, 64.

[87]It seems likely that the repulsive appearance and affliction of the servant in 53:2-4 are the result of maltreatment. If it is taken to suggest a condition of divinely imposed leprosy, however, as is suggested by B. Duhm as well as some early interpreters (*cf.*, *e.g.*, *b. Sanhedrin* 98b and Aquila's rendering of נָגוּעַ in 53:4 with ἁφέμενον, 'leprous'), then Moses' experience with leprosy in Ex. 4:6f. may provide the basis for this expectation. *Cf.* Allison, *The New Moses*, 69.

Pentateuch offers several examples of Moses' healing ministry (Nu. 12:13; 21:9; *cf.* Ex. 15:26; Dt. 28:60f.), which may also have contributed to the emphasis on healing in the ministry of Elijah, who is widely recognised as a second Moses figure.[90]

12) In terms of the fourth servant song, perhaps the most significant aspect of Moses' intercessory work was the fact that in his attempt to make atonement for Israel's idolatry with the golden calf he invoked upon himself the well-justified wrath of Yahweh (Ex. 32:30-35). Given the many examples in the second exodus of escalation over the original event (*cf. e.g.*, the lack of 'haste' in 52:12 by contrast to Ex. 12:11), a similar escalation in the experience and calling of the 'prophet like Moses' should not be unexpected.[91] Although the original Moses was not permitted to endure the wrath of Yahweh on behalf of his guilty people, this second Moses would be: 'But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed' (53:5; *cf.* vv. 8b, 10, 11b, 12b).[92] Anticipating the promise that 'Yahweh will make his life a reparation offering' (אָשָׁם, 53:10a), the prophet confesses, 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and Yahweh has laid on him the iniquity of us all' (53:6). As C. Stuhlmueller observes, it appears that a sacrifice greater than that described in Leviticus 4-5 was required because atonement was needed for the wilful sin of a nation, not merely sins of inadvertence.[93]

Although Moses' self-sacrifice was declined at Mt. Sinai, nevertheless he did suffer for the sake of his people as a result of their

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[88]*Cf.* J. Muilenburg, 'The Intercession of the Covenant Mediator (Exodus 33.1a, 12-17)', in P. Ackroyd and B. Lindars (eds.), *Words and Meanings* (Cambridge: CUP, 1968) 159-81; Coats, *The Moses Tradition*, 63-75; Allison, *The New Moses*, 25, n. 45.

[89]Coats, *The Moses Tradition*, 135-50 (Ch. 12: 'Healing and the Moses Traditions').

[90]*Cf., e.g.*, S.J. DeVries, *1 Kings* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985) 209f.; Schmid, *Die Gestalt des Mose*, 60. *Cf.* also discussion of Mal. 4:5 [Heb. 3:23] in G.P. Hugenberger, 'Malachi' in D.A. Carson *et al.* (eds.), *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition* (Leicester and Downer's Grove, IL: IVP, 1994).

[91]Schmid rejects a second Moses identification for the servant mainly, it seems, because Moses did not suffer vicariously for the people (*Die Gestalt des Mose*, 64f.). This objection fails to do justice to Moses' express wish in Ex. 32:30-35 and the pattern of escalation from type to antitype discussed above.

[92]Deutero-Isaiah is not alone in its use of Mosaic aspirations as an apparent basis for Israel's eschatology. *Cf., e.g.*, Joel 2:28f., which seems to reflect the hope expressed in Nu. 11:29.

[93]'Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah', 342. F. Crüsemann considers that this verse offers the earliest clear expression of the concept of justification ('Jahwes Gerechtigkeit im Alten Testament', *Evangelische Theologie* 36 [1976] 427-50).

rebellion at the Meribah mentioned in Numbers 20:2-13; 27:12-14. The account in Numbers acknowledges that Moses sinned when he struck the rock 'a second time' (פַּעֲמָיִם, presumably referring back to Exodus 17 as the first occasion).[94] The penalty for this offence was that Moses would die without leading Israel into the Promised Land. As with the sufferings of the servant in 53:4, however, ultimately it was not on account of Moses' own sin that he was 'stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted'. The references to this event in Deuteronomy demonstrate that Yahweh was angry with Moses because of Israel's sin, which had been the provocation for his failure: 'Even with me Yahweh was angry on your account, saying, "You also shall not enter there"' (Dt. 1:37; *cf.* also Dt. 3:26; 4:20-22).

Finally, it is possible that the promise, 'he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days' (יִרְאֶה זֶרַע יַאֲרִיךְ יָמִים, 53:10), implies an additional escalation of the experience of the original Moses. If, as observed by R.J. Clifford, the expression 'prolong days' has the meaning that it does in Deuteronomy (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Dt. 22:7, 'Let the mother [bird] go, taking only the young for yourself, in order that it may go well with you and you may live long [וְהַאֲרַכְתָּ יָמִים]'), then the second Moses will be allowed to enjoy life in the Promised Land.[95] Moreover, given the ample evidence in the immediate context for the metaphorical use of the term 'seed' (זֶרַע) as a reference to Israel (43:5; 44:3; 48:19; 54:3; *etc.*; *cf.* 49:20f.), it appears that the second Moses may experience the realization of Yahweh's cancelled promise/threat to Moses in Exodus 32:10 to raise up from him a new Israel.

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, the present paper suggests a way forward out of the current interpretative impasse regarding the servant's identity. Rejecting the artificial dismemberment of Isaiah 40-66 advanced by B. Duhm and others, who isolate the servant songs from their immediate literary context, and assisted by the generally neglected Talmudic insight regarding the presence of Mosaic allusions within the songs, this study has argued for an identification of the servant with the expected 'prophet like Moses' mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:14ff. and 34:10ff. Although the second Moses hypothesis proves its heuristic value in resolving significant exegetical problems in the servant songs,

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[94]*Cf.* Ps. 106:33.
[95]'Isaiah 40-66', 584. *Cf.* also Dt. 4:26, 40; 11:9; *etc.*

it does not purport to offer an exhaustive explanation for every detail.[96] It is the contention of this paper, however, that only by recognizing the servant as predominantly a second Moses figure can justice be done both to the integrity of the servant songs with their context, which is dominated by second exodus imagery, and to the otherwise perplexing combination of corporate and individual, as well as prophetic, royal, and priestly traits in the portrait of the servant. In short, precisely because he is the long awaited 'prophet like Moses', there is a substantial degree of truth in most previous studies on the identity of the servant. It goes beyond the scope of the present paper to examine the extensive use of the servant songs within the New Testament.[97] Nevertheless, a felicitous consequence of the present approach to the servant songs is the substantial support it offers for the New Testament's messianic interpretation without presupposing that interpretation, as is often done.[98]

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[96]Since Moses was the paradigm prophet (Dt. 18:14-22; *cf.* also Ho. 12:13[14]), there is a second Moses hue to the coloration of the biblical accounts of many of the subsequent prophets. Their call narratives are typically patterned after his; there are similarities in their experiences of rejection and suffering, *etc.* Deborah, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, and Jeremiah provide obvious examples. While the assessment of Dt. 34:10-12 that none of these attained the stature of the expected 'prophet like Moses' still obtains (especially with respect to Moses' intended self-sacrifice to avert the wrath of Yahweh—*cf.* Ezk. 13:5; 22:30; Ps. 106:23), one need not exclude the possibility that some details in the portrait of the servant, as the final 'prophet like Moses', may have drawn from, or been reinforced by, the experiences of earlier prophets, including Deutero-Isaiah himself.

[97]See, *e.g.*, M.N. Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant. The Influence of the Servant Concept of Deutero-Isaiah in the New Testament* (London: S.P.C.K., 1959); W.A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (NTS 14; Leiden: Brill, 1967); R.T. France, 'The Servant of the Lord in the Teaching of Jesus', *TynB* 19 (1968) 26-52; *idem*, *Jesus and the Old Testament: His Application of Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982); Allison, *The New Moses* (1993).

[98]Although משח is not used of the servant within the songs (unless מִשְׁחַת in 52:14 is emended with 1QIsa[a] to read משחתי, 'I anointed', which seems unlikely), nor is the servant identified as a descendant of David, nevertheless the term 'messianic', understood in a less restricted sense, seems appropriate as a reference to the promised 'prophet like Moses'. For evidence that prophets were thought of as 'anointed', *cf.* Ps. 105:15 // 1 Ch. 16:22. *Cf.* also 1 Ki. 19:16; Joel 2:28[3:1]. Furthermore, if, as was argued above, 61:1-7 refers to the servant of the songs, then this text offers further support for the use of the term 'messianic' since משח appears in 61:1. See also Acts 3:18 and the discussion of this verse in Allison, *The New Moses*, 75, 88f.

Adding cogency to the New Testament's application of the servant songs to Jesus is the consensus view of Jesus' contemporaries that the promised restoration from the exile had not yet been accomplished. So, *e.g.*, N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant. Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991) 140f.; *idem, Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol. 1: The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992) 268-72; and J.M. Scott, 'Restoration of Israel' in G.F. Hawthorne *et al.* (eds.). *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Leicester and Downers Grove: IVP, 1993) 796-805. The writer is grateful to Prof. G.K. Beale, who kindly drew his attention to this work.

CHAPTER 7

THE KING IN THE BOOK OF ISAIAH[1]

Richard Schultz

Summary

Contrary to what often is claimed, the King and the Servant do not represent independent, divergent messianic figures within the book of Isaiah. A comparison of the content and literary placement of the messianic King and Servant texts reveals the contextual appropriateness of each portrait as well as numerous thematic and verbal links between the two figures, suggesting that the King and the royal Servant are integrally related, if not identified. However, Motyer's identification of a third messianic figure in Isaiah 56-66, the Anointed Conqueror, is rejected. Throughout the book of Isaiah, Yahweh remains Israel's true king, working to redeem and glorify Zion, an emphasis that is illustrated by the recontextualization of the 'lion and lamb' promise from Isaiah 11:6-9 in 65:25.

[1]This essay is a revised version of a paper read on 7th July 1994 before the Old Testament Study Group of the Tyndale Fellowship in Swanwick, Derbyshire.

I. Introductory Issues

Isaiah 9 and 11, which describe the future ruler who will reign over God's people in justice and righteousness, are two of the most familiar prophetic texts among all those commonly considered to be 'messianic'. Why is this royal figure introduced at this point and in this manner within the book of Isaiah? To state the question differently: What is the function of this description of the future ruler within the book of Isaiah as a whole? Why has this king seemingly faded from view when Yahweh's servant bears the iniquity of many (53:11), when one comes from Edom to tread the winepress alone (63:2), or when a 'new' Jerusalem is created to be a delight (65:17-18)? In other words, why is there no throne in Isaiah 65-66, when the book of Isaiah reaches its glorious conclusion?

1. Diversity and Unity in Isaiah's Messianic Portraits

These questions highlight a basic issue of dispute which must be resolved when discussing the messianism of the book of Isaiah: To what extent are these various figures interrelated? Is it appropriate to speak of 'diverse *messianic concepts*' within the book of Isaiah, as G.E. Ladd does? According to Ladd:

> The OT does not conflate these messianic figures; they stand as... distinct concepts, without indication as to how they are related to each other or how there could be such diversity in the coming of God's kingdom.[2]

Can we go no farther than Ladd suggests, or is there an *exegetical* and not simply a *dogmatic* justification for speaking of *one* messianic figure with varying emphases within the book of Isaiah?

Most scholars agree with Ladd that there is no unified presentation of the messianic hope within the book of Isaiah. Alec Motyer, however, in his recent commentary on Isaiah, proposes that there are three messianic portraits in the Isaianic literature which are 'meant as facets of the one Messianic person'[3] and seeks to

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[2]G.E. Ladd, 'Eschatology', *ISBE* 2:133. Ladd refers specifically to the 'Davidic messianic king' and the 'Suffering Servant' in Isaiah and to Daniel's 'Son of man'. B.S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments. Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 455, similarly states: 'The overwhelming impression that emerges... is that of enormous diversity. To speak of "the messianic hope" seems to impose a unity and a systematization which is not reflected in the sources themselves.'

demonstrate this on both a structural and a thematic level. On a *structural* level, Motyer views the book of Isaiah as built around these three portraits: 'the Book of the King' (chs. 1-37), 'the Book of the Servant' (chs. 38-55), and 'the Book of the Anointed Conqueror' (chs. 56-66). These portraits are complementary; in Motyer's words:

> The King rules over the whole world, but how can he do so until the Servant opens the way for all who will to come to feast and to enjoy the 'sure mercies of David' (55:1-5) and until the Conqueror creates a world free of opposition?[4]

On a *thematic* level, Motyer notes that each of the portraits contains the following elements: the endowment with Spirit and word, an emphasis on righteousness, a Davidic motif, the inclusion of Israel and the Gentile world, and the messianic 'enigma' of one who is plainly man and truly God.

Motyer's treatment of the 'Messianic hope' is helpful and suggestive, but there are several problems with his analysis. First of all, his structural division between chs. 37 and 38 in the midst of the Hezekiah narrative is unwarranted. Motyer views chs. 38-39 as the historical prologue to chs. 40-55. However, chs. 38-39 also are to be understood in the context of the Assyrian siege which is described in chs. 36-37 ('in those days', 38:1; *cf.* 'at that time', 39:1; 'And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria', 38:6). Furthermore, chs. 38-39 form an inseparable part of Isaiah's portrait of King Hezekiah who trusted in Yahweh in times of national and personal crisis (37:4, 20; 38:3) and requested a sign (38:22; *cf.* 37:30), contrasting with Ahaz who trusted in foreign alliances and rejected a sign (8:6-8, *cf.* 2 Ki. 16:9; and 7:11-12, *cf.* v. 14).[5] Equally problematic is Motyer's division between chs. 55 and 56, which, though common, ultimately can be traced back to the historical-critical claim that ch. 56 (particularly its references to the 'restored' Temple in vv. 5 and 7) marks the beginning of 'Third Isaiah'. Delitzsch's division of Isaiah 40-

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[3]J.A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Leicester: IVP, 1993) 13. See also *idem*, 'Three in One or One in Three: A Dipstick into the Isaianic Literature', *Churchman* 108 (1994) 22-36.
[4]*Ibid.*, 16.
[5]For a listing and assessment of the numerous verbal and thematic links between Is. 7-11 and 36-39, see P.R. Ackroyd, 'Isaiah 36-39: Structure and Function', in W.C. Delsman *et al.* (eds.), *Von Kanaan bis Kerala* (AOAT 211; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1982) 3-21; and E.W. Conrad, 'The Royal Narratives and the Structure of the Book of Isaiah', *JSOT* 41 (1988) 67-81.

66 into three enneads of chapters on the basis of the repeated reference to the fate of the wicked (48:22; 57:21; 66:24) is thematically and structurally more convincing.[6]

Secondly, Motyer's identification of 'Anointed Conqueror' texts (59:21; 61:1-3; 61:10-62:7; 63:1-6) is uncertain, for it is not clear that each of these represents a distinct textual unit or that these texts refer to a messianic figure rather than to Yahweh. One might suggest that the parallels which Motyer notes between the description of the Servant and that of the 'Anointed Conqueror' may be the *basis* rather than the *proof* of his selection.[7] Thirdly, some of his alleged thematic links are hardly obvious (for example, that the conquest of Edom in 63:1 is a Davidic motif and that 53:1 identifies the Servant as 'the arm of the LORD').[8] Finally, by speaking of the 'books' of the King, the

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[6]F. Delitzsch, *The Prophecies of Isaiah* (ET; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) Vol. II, 128-29. Isaiah 58-66 also is marked off as a distinct section by its mention of the rebels in its first and final verses (58:1; 66:24, both using the root פשׁע) and its repeated reference to glory, a theme entirely missing in the previous section (כבוד is used 5 times in 40-48, 12 times in 58-66, but not once in 49-57). For a recent critique of the 'Third Isaiah' hypothesis and its dependence upon the alleged references to the reconstruction of the Temple in Is. 56ff., see C.R. Seitz, 'Isaiah, Book of (Third Isaiah)', *ABD* 3:501-507.

[7]Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 15-16, views these 'anointed conqueror' texts as parallel to and contrasting with the 'servant' texts (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12). It is difficult to demonstrate that a messianic warrior is in view in each of these texts:

(1) In 59:21 the most likely addressee is the remnant in Israel, as can be inferred from v. 20 and the mention of future generations in v. 21, and not the prophet or a messianic figure (see Delitzsch, *ibid.*, Vol. II, 381).

(2) In 61:1-3, in the light of the similarities between this passage and the 'Servant Songs' 42:1-4 and 49:1-6 which have been noted by numerous commentators, it is plausible that the servant of the previous texts rather than a conqueror is speaking (See below, fn. 48. According to H. Gressmann, *Der Ursprung der israelitische-jüdischen Eschatologie* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1905] 261; *idem*, *Der Messias*, [FRANT 43; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1929] 204-206, the messianic king is the speaker here.)

(3) In 62:1-7 nearly all commentators consider the prophet or, more likely, Yahweh (so also LXX and Targum) to be the speaker.

(4) In 63:1-6, the 'Divine Warrior Hymn', 63:1-6, nearly all are agreed that Yahweh is the warrior, as suggested by the verbal parallel between 59:16 and 63:5 (see P.D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975] 203; also Delitzsch, Duhm, McKenzie, Pauritsch, Westermann, and Whybray). For a fuller discussion of the 'divine warrior' see T. Longman and D. Reid, *God is a Warrior* (Studies in O.T. Biblical Theology; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995). Furthermore, as is often asserted with regard to the so-called 'Servant Songs' (see Mettinger, n. 36), it is not necessarily legitimate to isolate these four texts from their contexts and then chart and compare their contents.

Servant, and the Anointed Conqueror, Motyer makes the messianic theme too prominent in the book of Isaiah. Do the three figures which Motyer distinguishes dominate their respective sections of Isaiah, especially chs. 56-66, as extensively as he suggests?

The purpose of this essay is to investigate whether these three figures are linked on an *intertextual* level. We use the term 'intertextuality' not simply as 'a covering term for all the possible relations that can be established between texts',[9] but rather to describe the relationship between texts which clearly are linked by similar themes or motifs, as in Motyer's examples, or by similar phrases and expressions. In other words, are there any verbal threads which stitch two or all three of these portraits together, thus possibly indicating that these figures are to be identified or at least integrally related? While exploring this question, we also will discuss the function of the portrayal of the messianic king within the larger structure of the book of Isaiah. It is not our intention to defend or dispute the label 'messianic' as it relates to these texts but simply to examine the relationship between those texts commonly considered as such,[10] focusing on the king and the servant because of the difficulties already noted in identifying Motyer's 'Anointed Conqueror' as a messianic figure.

2. *Messianism in the Old Testament*

Whoever proposes to discuss the 'messianic' texts within a particular Old Testament book, especially a prophetic book such as Isaiah, is immediately confronted with two methodological difficulties which are not easily resolved. The first of these is how to define the term 'messianic'. At the one extreme are the minimalists—those scholars

[8]Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 13-14.

[9]P.D. Miscall, 'Isaiah: New Heavens, New Earth, New Book', in D.N. Fewell (ed.), *Reading Between Texts. Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1992) 44. According to Miscall, *ibid.*, 44, these 'relations can be based on anything from quotes and direct references to indirect allusions to common words and even letters to dependence on language itself'. That such a broad definition can lead to some questionable intertextual relationships is well illustrated by some of the essays in the volume.

[10]According to R. Kilian, *Jesaja 1-39* (Erträge der Forschung; Darmstadt: WBG, 1983) 5, the messianic character of Is. 11:1-9 is almost universally recognized, there are some dissenting voices regarding 9:1-7 [Heb. 8:23-9:6], and 7:10-17 is disputed. Similarly, Herbert Haag, in his survey of literature regarding the 'Servant of God' in 'Second' Isaiah, notes numerous twentieth-century proponents of the messianic interpretation of one or more of these texts: *Der Gottesknecht bei Deuterojesaja* (Erträge der Forschung 233; Darmstadt: WBG, 1985) ch. 4.

who limit the term to those Old Testament passages which use the Hebrew root משח, such as Daniel 9:25-26, and/or refer to an eschatological salvific Davidic king. Thus J. Becker claims that one will search in vain for Messianism in the Old Testament until the 2nd century BC.[11]

At the other extreme are the 'maximalists'—those scholars, usually conservative, who use the term 'messianic' to refer to any and every text which they consider to be in some sense predictive of the life and work of Jesus Christ. The recent treatments of the subject by Ron Rhodes[12] and Paul Schenk[13] are typical in this regard. The traditional approach to messianic prophecies is represented by Delitzsch, König, and Heinisch, all of whom begin their chronological surveys with the *Protoevangelium* in Genesis 3:15. Gerard van Groningen, in his comprehensive volume on *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament*, employs a similarly broad definition of 'messianic', including those texts which describe the promises of salvation, the work to be executed to carry out the promises, the qualifications, the means employed, the goals set, the persons required in addition to the king, the realm over which the Messiah reigns, and the results of his reign, as well. This allows him to discuss virtually any eschatological passage as 'messianic'.[14]

Otto Hofius notes the problem caused by the failure to distinguish between a narrower use of 'Messiah' as a *terminus technicus* and a broader use to designate any eschatological Saviour figure. In the opinion of Hofius, not only clarity but also a careful analysis of the

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[11]J. Becker, *Messiaserwartung im A.T.* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977) 74.

[12]*Christ before the Manger. The Life and Times of the Preincarnate Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992).

[13]*Bist du, der da kommen soll? Christuszeugnisse im AT* (Gießen: Brunnen, 1991).

[14]G. van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the O.T.* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990) 20; *cf.* also E. Riehm, *Messianic Prophecy: Its Origin, Historical Growth, and Relation to N.T. Fulfilment* (ET, 2nd ed; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1891) and J. Ridderbos, *De messiaansche Heilsbelofte en de nieuwere Ontdekkingen* (Kampen: Kok, 1918) who similarly employ a broad definition. It might be more accurate to suggest that messianic texts are by definition eschatological but that eschatological texts are not necessarily messianic. However, P.D. Wegner, *An Examination of Kingship and Messianic Expectation in Isaiah 1-35* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1992), 4, questions 'whether this eschatological perspective is a necessary component of the concept of "messianic expectation"'.

There is a vast number of studies examining Old Testament messianism. For an extensive bibliography, see van Groningen. A valuable new contribution to the discussion is made by the *Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie, Band 8: Der Messias* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1994).

Old Testament and early Jewish sources dictate the limitation of the term to a royal Saviour figure.[15] Accordingly, that is how the term 'Messiah' will be employed in this study. This means that, unless the 'King' in Isaiah 1-39 and the 'Servant' in Isaiah 40-66 are portrayed similarly, they must be viewed as distinct figures, as Ladd has claimed, and only the former can be described accurately as 'messianic'.

3. *The Unity and Structure of the Book of Isaiah*

For those familiar with the often polemical secondary literature addressing the question of the authorship of Isaiah, it is somewhat surprising to note that the majority of the scholars discussing the book of Isaiah today assume its basic redactional or tradition-historical unity.[16] On the one hand, most previous explanations of the book's present shape, such as the accidental juxtaposition theory, the 'left over space at the end of the scroll theory', and the 'alumni of Isaiah's school of prophecy' theory are clearly deficient and unconvincing. On the other hand, there are simply too many verbal and thematic parallels between Isaiah 1-39 and 40-66, which have long been overlooked or undervalued, to deny the existence of an intentional relationship, even an interdependence or a mutual influence between the major sections of the book of Isaiah.[17] If what we have before us in this prophetic book is more than simply a collection of 66 consecutive Sabbath sermons and the written messages have been ordered in such a way as to convey a message that surpasses their individual messages when first proclaimed,[18] then it is likely that the messianic portraits in

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[15]O. Hofius, 'Ist Jesus der Messias? Thesen', *Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie, Band 8: Der Messias*, 103-104. Georg Fohrer, however, denies emphatically that the Messiah is a Saviour figure; *Messiasfrage und Bibelverständnis* (SVG 213/214; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1957) 22.

[16]However, most of these scholars do not assign a greater authorial role to the eighth century prophet than did their predecessors. For a survey of recent contributions to the issue, see J.J. Schmitt, *Isaiah and his Interpreters* (New York: Paulist, 1986), and J. Vermeylen, 'L'unité du livre d'Isaïe' in J. Vermeylen (ed.), *The Book of Isaiah. Le Livre d'Isaïe: Les Oracles et leurs Relectures. Unité et Complexité de l'Ouvrage* (Leuven: Leuven UP, 1989) 11-53.

[17]Those who have devoted special attention to verbal and thematic links between the various sections of the book of Isaiah include R.E. Clements, 'Beyond Tradition-Criticism: Deutero-Isaianic Development of First Isaiah's Themes' *JSOT* 31 (1985) 95-113; R. Margalioth, *The Indivisible Isaiah. Evidence for the Single Authorship of the Prophetic Book.* (New York: Yeshiva University, New York, 1964); R. Rendtorff, 'Zur Komposition des Buches Jesaja', *VT* 34 (1984) 295-320; O.H. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr. Jesaja 35 als redaktionelle Brücke zwischen dem Ersten und dem Zweiten Jesaja* (SBS 121; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1985).

Isaiah are not simply isolated 'points of light' in the gloom of Israelite history (that is, best studied within the context of progressive revelation) but rather structurally significant in their literary placement and thematically significant in their development of the prophetic message.[19]

II. The King in the Book of Isaiah

Most of the references to a king in the book of Isaiah are found in chs. 1-39[20] and refer to the contemporary human king of Judah, Israel, Assyria, or another foreign power, who often is blamed for the dismal situation of God's people (*cf.* Is. 8:21). This frail and faulty human king is contrasted with the divine king in Isaiah 6:1: 'In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple'; the Lord is clearly identified as *the* King, Yahweh Sabaoth (6:5). As Judah's king passes from the scene, the prophet is reminded of the identity of the Israel's true king, a truth which God's people often had forgotten since Samuel's farewell speech (1 Sa. 12:12). The divine king is mentioned again in Isaiah 24:23 as reigning (מָלַךְ יהוה צְבָאוֹת) on Mt. Zion,[21] and is confessed as king in 33:22: 'For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us.' Yahweh identifies himself as Israel's king in 41:21, 43:15, and 44:6, passages which emphasize his

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[18]Among those who have proposed a distinct structure for the book of Isaiah are C.A. Evans, 'On the unity and parallel structure of Isaiah', *VT* 38 (1988) 129-47; A. Gileadi, 'A Holistic Structure of the Book of Isaiah' (PhD dissertation: Brigham Young University, 1981) and *The Apocalyptic Book of Isaiah, A New Translation with Interpretative Key* (Provo, Utah: Hebraeus Press, 1982); R.H. O'Connell, *Concentricity and Continuity. The Literary Structure of Isaiah* (JSOTS 188; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), and M.A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-4 and the Post-Exilic Understanding of the Isaianic Tradition* (BZAW 171; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988).

[19]This approach is the opposite of that taken in earlier treatments of messianic prophecies. According to R.E. Clements, 'The Messianic Hope in the O.T.' *JSOT* 43 (1989) 7, in Hengstenberg 'individual elements of the doctrine of the messiah were treated as disclosed by God in an arbitrary and random fashion throughout the long history of Israel.'

[20]Those passages referring to the king of Judah or Israel are: 1:1; 6:1; 7:1, 6, 16; 8:21; 14:28; 36:1, 2, 21; 37:1, 5, 10; 38:9; 39:3. מֶלֶךְ is also used in Isaiah to refer to the King of Assyria (7:17, 20; 8:4, 7; 10:12; 20:1, 4, 6; 30:33; 36:1, 2, 4, 8, 13-16, 18; 37:4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 18, 21, 33, 37; 38:6), other specific foreign kings (7:1, 16; 14:4; 36:6; 37:9, 13; 39:1, 7), to an unspecified king or kings in general (14:9, 18; 19:4, 11; 24:21; 41:2; 45:1; 49:7, 23; 52:15; 60:3, 10, 11, 16; 62:2), or as a general designation of authority (10:8; 23:15; 57:9 [where NIV reads 'Molech']).

sovereign power and authority. A final reference in 66:1 to Yahweh's heavenly throne in contrast to the earthly temple recalls the initial description of the divine king in 6:1. He is the one who is sovereign over the nations, including Israel.

In addition to the human and the divine king, there is the future ruler or leader mentioned in Isaiah 9, 11, 16, 32, and possibly 33.[22] Surprisingly, neither of the so-called 'messianic king' texts, Isaiah 9 and 11, specifically call this one 'king' (מֶלֶךְ). Isaiah 9:6-7 [Heb. vv. 5-6] does speak of the government being on his shoulders and of his (eternal) reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, using the terms הַמִּשְׂרָה and מַמְלַכְתּוֹ. In this passage, however, it is clear that it is the *true* king, Yahweh Sabaoth, whose zeal will accomplish this transformation (*cf.* 9:3-4 [2-3]). He will enlarge the nation and shatter the oppressive yoke. Isaiah 11, however, merely emphasizes this future ruler's judicial or, as Seebass terms it, his 'domestic' (innenpolitische) activities rather than his military exploits.[23] Isaiah

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[21]Most commentators and translations render מָלַךְ as a future condition, 'will reign', since the preceding verses describe Yahweh's future cosmic judgments. H. Wildberger, *Jesaja*, (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1978) 888, translates 'will have become king' (wird König geworden sein) as most appropriate following והיה ביום ההוא in v. 21, while J.D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33* (Waco: Word, 1985) 327, uses the simple present 'reigns'. In the light of the extensive discussion of how to interpret the יהוה מלך of the so-called 'enthronement psalms' (*cf.* D. Michel, 'Studien zu den sogenannten Thronbesteigungspsalmen' *VT* 6 [1956] 40-68), one is justified in suggesting that the reign of Yahweh on Mt. Zion is constant and the *basis* of the future judgment (כִּי מָלַךְ יהוה צְבָאוֹת) rather than its *result*.

[22]The most comprehensive treatment of this subject is by P.D. Wegner, *An Examination of Kingship and Messianic Expectation in Isaiah 1-35.* Wegner discusses Is. 7:10-17; 9:1-7 [Heb. 8:23-9:6]; 11:1-9; and 32:1-8. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 13, n. 1, considers the following passages to be the 'main Messianic passages' in Isaiah on the King: 7:10-15; 9:1-7 [8:23-9:6]; 11:1-16; 14:28-32; 24:21-23; 32:1-8; 33:17-24. The King in Isaiah 1-12 is treated more fully in the contribution of D. Schibler to this volume.

[23]H. Seebass, *Herrscherverheißungen im A.T.* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1992) 26. Seebass describes the ruler in Is. 9 as a 'vizier', though with no diminution in power, *ibid.*, 13. W. Harrelson, 'Nonroyal Motifs in the Royal Eschatology' in B.W. Anderson and W. Harrelson (eds.), *Israel's Prophetic Heritage* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962) 151, suggests that the term 'king' is deliberately avoided because Yahweh is Israel's true king; *cf.* also J. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986) 343, n. 15. M.E.W. Thompson nevertheless considers it appropriate to call the person described in Is. 9 'Isaiah's Ideal King', *JSOT* 24 (1982) 79-88. For a discussion of the non-militaristic portrayal of the future ruler, see U. Kellermann, *Messias und Gesetz: Grundlinien einer alttestamentlichen Heilserwartung. Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Einführung* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1971) 22, 25-26

16:5, in the midst of the oracle against Moab, probably also speaks of the future ruler, combining motifs from both chs. 9 and 11 in describing him: 'In love (בַּחֶסֶד) a throne will be established, in faithfulness (בֶּאֱמֶת) a man will sit on it, one from the tent of David, one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of righteousness.'[24] In each of these three passages the emphasis is on the establishment or maintenance of justice and righteousness (9:7 [6]; 11:4-5; 16:5).

It is not until 32:1, however, that the term מֶלֶךְ is first used to designate the future ruler. In this neglected text, authority is portrayed as shared with rulers (שָׂרִים), providing shade and refuge from the storm (וְסֵתֶר זָרֶם... כְּצֵל), picking up imagery from Isaiah 4:6 (לְצֵל... וּלְמַסְתּוֹר מִזֶּרֶם), where this benefit is attributed to Yahweh's activities. The king's reign will bring to an end the people's blindness and deafness (*cf.* Is. 6:9-10) and usher in a time of righteousness and peace (*cf.* 9:6-7 [5-6] and 11:5-9) after the Assyrian threat is past (31:8-9, *cf.* also the reference to 'quietness and confidence' in 32:17 and 30:15).[25]

The king is mentioned again in 33:17. In ch. 33, as in ch. 9, the deliverance is the work of Yahweh who 'will fill Zion with justice and righteousness' (v. 5) when he arises to judge the peoples (vv. 10-12) and to remove 'those people of an obscure speech, with their strange, incomprehensible tongue' (v. 19, perhaps an allusion to 28:11). At that time, 'your eyes will see the king in his beauty and view a land that stretches afar' (v. 17). Is this the future earthly king of 32:1 or Yahweh, Israel's king, as in 33:22? In other words, does 33:17 complete the portrait of the future ruler introduced in ch. 9 or of the divine ruler introduced in 6:1, 5, announcing that the One whom Isaiah alone beheld in his commissioning vision will one day be seen by *all* those whose sins are similarly forgiven (33:24, *cf.* 6:7)? Though it is difficult to decide, in the light of the parallel to 6:5 and the explicit identification of the king in 33:22, the latter seems more likely.[26]

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[24]J.H. Hayes and S.A. Irvine, *Isaiah. The Eighth-century Prophet: His Times & His Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987) 243-44, view v. 5 as a quotation, a flattering description of the present monarch by the Moabite emissaries; *cf.* W. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte in Jesaja 1-39. Messias, Heileger Rest, Völker*, (Forschung zur Bibel 46; Würzburg: Echter, 1982) 257. Wildberger, however, *Jesaja*, 622, interprets this verse as an expression of an 'eschatological-messsianic hope', though he dates the verse to the post-exilic period. The thematic similarities between this verse and Is. 9 and 11 support a messianic interpretation.

Motyer also views 14:28-32 as a messianic passage, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 13, n. 1, but this is not obvious, despite the mention of the kingly root (מִשֹּׁרֶשׁ, v. 29; *cf.* 11:1). It more likely refers to the Assyrian king (so Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 219, and Hayes/Irvine, *ibid.*, 237).

This raises the question of the identity of this future ruler, of his relationship to Yahweh, and of the literary placement of the texts announcing his reign. Seebass claims that, since the texts which speak of a future ruler do not use the term 'Messiah', they make no direct contribution to an Old Testament messianic hope,[27] but this understanding is unnecessarily restrictive. With regard to Isaiah 9, the scholarly consensus seems to be that this text is either Isaianic (Duhm, Alt, Wolff, Wildberger) or messianic (Fohrer, Otto Kaiser, Werner, Kilian) but definitely not both. Many scholars view Hezekiah or Josiah as the awaited king, while others who do not make this explicit identification see no reference to superhuman *i.e*, divine qualities or abilities. According to Wegner, for example, the names of Isaiah 9:6 [5] are to be interpreted as names of God describing his activities rather than as names describing the Messiah or ascribing deity to him. As Wegner expresses it: 'Yahweh is "a wonderful planner" since he brings

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[25]For a discussion of this verse, see J.J.M. Roberts, 'The Divine King and the Human Community in Isaiah's Vision of the Future', in H.B. Huffmon, *et al.* (eds.), *The Quest for the Kingdom of God* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 127-36; and H.-J. Hermisson, 'Zukunftserwartung und Gegenwartskritik in der Verkündigung Jesajas' *EvTh* 33 (1973) 57, 66-67. The dating of this passage is disputed (which is also the case with most other 'messianic' texts). For a defence of the Isaianic authorship see Roberts, 130-32. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, 259, and Hermann Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte in der Josiazeit* (WMANT 48; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1977) 213-15, who ascribe the verse to the Josianic Redaction, explain it as presenting an idealized picture of Josiah as the contemporary ruler. Clements objects to the fact that this passage does not foretell the advent of the ruler, as in 11:1-5. However, if the 'King' passages build on one another, there is no need to repeat what already was described in Is. 9. Furthermore, 32:1-5 clearly portrays a future, not a present, situation. Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 1253, dates 32:1-5 to 500 BC, objecting to the mention of the שׂרים sharing the King's rule, but does not every ruler need his court officials? Scott, Fohrer, and Otto Kaiser view it as the work of a post-exilic wisdom writer. However, the mere use of 'wisdom vocabulary' hardly demands a later origin within wisdom circles, especially if Is. 11 which also uses 'wisdom vocabulary' is acknowledged as Isaianic.

For a thorough study of the 'hearing and seeing' motif in Isaiah, see K.T. Aitken, 'Hearing and Seeing: Metamorphoses of a Motif in Isaiah 1-39', in P.R. Davies and D.J.A. Clines (eds.), *Among the Prophets. Language, Image and Structure in the Prophetic Writings*, (JSOTS 144; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 12-41.

[26]This is also the view of M.Z. Brettler, *God is King. Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (JSOTS 76; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989) 73; Roberts, 'Isaiah 33: An Isaianic Elaboration of the Zion Tradition' in C.L. Meyers & M. O'Connor (eds.), *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 15-25, esp. 23; and Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-39* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974) 347. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, 269, associates it with 32:1-5.

[27]Seebass, *Herrscherverheißungen*, 86.

about the expected deliverance and he is "the prince of peace", because he brings about a kingdom which will have no end of peace.'[28] In other words, most scholars, including some evangelicals, find no traces of 'messianic prophecy' as traditionally understood in Isaiah 1-39 which they would attribute to the eighth century prophet. This conclusion, which may be due largely to tradition-historical *a prioris* rather than demanded by the textual data can be contrasted with that of Levey:

> It is our contention that the architects of Jewish Messianism are the prophet Isaiah and his disciples, and that the historical event which precipitated it was the Assyrian crisis. Psychologically, Messianism contains a survivalist ego-structure which reverts to the Assyrian crisis.[29]

We already have observed that the texts portraying the qualities, activities, and achievements of the future ruler clearly indicate that it is Yahweh who takes the initiative, who delivers his people, who brings about the transformation. The future ruler simply administers the kingdom or sustains the changes. This is in keeping with the provisions of the Davidic covenant announced in 2 Samuel 7, to which Isaiah 9:7 [Heb. v. 6] probably refers: God is the one who establishes the kingdom, raising up the Davidic offspring and guaranteeing continuity upon the throne forever. According to the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 17:14, 'I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever.' God remains the 'father', the king his 'son'; the kingdom of Yahweh is in the hands of David's descendants (2 Ch. 13:8). In the dual election of Jerusalem and David (Ps. 132:11-14), God chose a dwelling place and a ruling representative, but he remains *the* king. This helps to explain why the texts we have considered present this ruler in his role as judge rather than as a military leader, despite the often militaristic portraits of the successful kings of Judah and Israel in the Old Testament historical

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[28]Wegner, 'A Re-examination of Isaiah IX 1-6' *VT* 42 (1992) 112. According to Fohrer, *Messiasfrage und Bibelverständnis*, 20, the Messiah is a mortal member of the deposed Davidic dynasty and not a supernatural being.

[29]S.H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation. The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum* (Monographs of the Hebrew Union College II; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1974) 144. See also J. Jensen, *Isaiah 1-39* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1984) 111: 'There is a far heavier concentration of oracles relating to hopes of an ideal Davidide in the eighth and seventh-century prophets... than in those of the later periods... so there is little basis for arguing that such hopes arose only in exilic and postexilic times.'

books.[30]

Does the structure of the book of Isaiah gives us any clues as to how this future ruler is to be viewed? In Isaiah 1-39 there are three groups of texts in which the king and the people are challenged to trust God in the midst of a political crisis. Isaiah 6-11 present King Ahaz who refuses, chs. 28-33 present an unnamed king who is tempted to rely on Egypt rather than on God, and chs. 36-39 present Hezekiah who initially trusts Yahweh when the Assyrians surround Jerusalem in chs. 36-37 (also in his own personal crisis in ch. 38) before acting unwisely when visited by the Babylonian ambassadors in ch. 39. In each case, God's deliverance is promised. A five-fold connection between Isaiah 8-11 and Isaiah 28 suggests that we are to view these sections together as revolving around a similar issue: 8:15 is repeated almost verbatim in 28:13b; the image of the stone in 8:14 is used also in 28:16; the image of judgment used in ch. 8—the flooding waters—appears again in ch. 28 (שׁטף, עבר, 8:7-8; 28:2, 15, 17-19); 10:23 is identical to 28:22b; and the Hiphil of אמן is used at a key position in both passages (7:9 and 28:16).[31]

In both chs. 6-11 and 28-33, the failure of Judah's present king is portrayed, God's kingship is asserted as he carries out judgment through and on Assyria, and a future leader is announced who will rule God's people in justice and righteousness and guarantee the fruits of peace.[32] Ch. 6 begins with a vision of the exalted divine king who sits to judge a sinful people, chs. 7 and 8 portray Ahaz' lack of trust in God and the resultant threat for Israel and Judah, while the announcements of the coming ruler in chs. 9 and 11 bracket the description of the coming judgment on Assyria (10:5-19). Similarly, Isaiah 28-31 portray the weakness of the human leaders who seek help from Egypt rather than from Yahweh (28:14; 30:2; 31:1) and the results for Israel and

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[30]According to Fohrer, *Messiasfrage*, 19: 'The actual ruler is without a doubt God himself. But because he cannot appear bodily and reign on earth, he must have an earthly representative who reigns for him and at his commission. That is precisely who the Messiah is' (author's translation). In Roberts' words ('The Divine King and the Human Community', 129), the messianic king 'inherits and enhances the results of Yahweh's prior intervention'.

For a helpful discussion of the relationship between Yahweh's rule and the Messiah, see H.W. Wolff, 'Herrschaft Jahwes und Messiasgestalt im A.T.', *ZAW* 54 (1936) 168-202. Wolff, 191, describes the Messiah as a 'manifestation' (Erscheinungsform) of Yahweh.

[31]For a fuller discussion of the parallels between Is. 6-11 and 28-33 and their implications see R.L. Schultz, *The Search for Quotation: Verbal Parallels in the Prophets* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, forthcoming), ch. 8.

Judah, while chs. 32 and 33 bracket an announcement of Assyria's doom (33:1, *cf.* 31:8-9), speak of the coming ruler, and end with the assertion of God's divine kingship (33:22). Structural features thus serve to underline a key theme in this section of Isaiah: Yahweh the divine king is sovereign over the nations and accomplishes his purpose through and despite human kings. In contrast with the flawed kings of Judah, the coming ruler will not fail to carry out God's purposes. He is divinely equipped for this task, and whether or not he also possesses divine qualities, he may be termed the 'messianic king'. However, in the book of Isaiah, it is clear that the *divine* king in view is Yahweh Sabaoth, *not* Jesus of Nazareth.

III. The King and the Servant

It produced at least a ripple of excitement among the religious media in the fall of 1991 when Robert Eisenmann claimed that a Qumran fragment contained five lines which associated the shoot from Jesse's stump with the suffering Servant. Peter Stuhlmacher has recently suggested that the proper translation of the cited passage is that this shoot *slays*, as in Isaiah 11:4, rather than *being slain*.[33] This exchange reflects the scholarly interest in linking these two figures as part of a unified 'messianic hope'. However, most scholars deny that there is any explicit connection between the King and the Servant in the book of Isaiah. J.L. McKenzie states emphatically: 'The Servant is not the same figure as the Messiah, but a parallel figure which, as it stands,

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[32]It appears that it was the very failure of the Davidic king to meet the divine ideal and the resultant political crises which awakened the hopes that God would raise up some future monarch who would rule in justice and righteousness, thus assuring the people of experiencing the covenantal blessings rather than the curses. (See B. Klappert, 'King, Kingdom' in C. Brown (ed.), *NIDNTT* 2:374.) A differing but perhaps complementary view is that of J.L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1968) liii: 'Each succeeding descendant is a Messiah and can be addressed in messianic terms, because the Messiah is present in hope and in anticipation in each member of the dynasty... He recapitulates in himself the entire dynasty without any of its faults and failures.' *Cf.* also I. Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East* (2nd ed; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967). Given the history of the monarchy in Judah, this seems to be a too optimistic perspective.

[33]P. Stuhlmacher, 'Der messianische Gottesknecht', *Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie, Bd. 8: Der Messias*, 145-46. This translation would eliminate the association which Eisenmann claimed. See also M.G. Abegg, Jr., 'Messianic Hope and 4Q285: A Reassessment', *JBL* 113 (1994) 81-91.

cannot be reconciled with the messianic king,' and C.R. North, opines: 'For my part, I do not think anything is to be gained by attempts to prove that the Servant is the Davidic Messiah of Isa IX and XI'.[34] After a detailed comparison of the so-called 'Servant Songs' with the 'King' texts, we have to conclude that the verbal and thematic links between these specific texts are minimal, beyond those which Motyer has noted. Nevertheless, there are also significant links between the larger contexts which deserve closer examination, and there are also possible structural explanations for the abandonment of the 'future king' motif in Isaiah 40ff.

Motyer has observed that both the King and the Servant are described as possessing the Spirit of Yahweh (11:2; 42:1, both using the preposition עַל).[35] This would indicate that both are equally called or equipped by God, as were the prophets and judges, but does not serve to equate them. Similarly, both are involved in bringing about justice (with 11:5 and 42:3 emphasizing their faithfulness in carrying out this task). Furthermore, Motyer sees the Servant as linked to the Davidic lineage, as is the King in 9:7 [6] and 11:1, via 55:3, the reference coming precisely at the conclusion of the description of the Servant's work. Eissfeldt also relates 'the sure mercies of David' to the Servant Songs: 'There can be no doubt that Israel is here given the same promise which is found elsewhere in Isaiah 40-55, particularly in the "Servant Songs".' That Isaiah 55:3 ('I will make an everlasting covenant with you') is related to the Servant Songs is also suggested by their repeated mention of the Servant as a covenant (42:6; 49:8 *cf.* 54:10).[36]

Beyond these more direct parallels between the King and the Servant, there are some more general thematic links between the larger

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[34]McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 20; C.R. North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah. An Historical and Critical Study* (2nd ed; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1956) 218.

[35]As is also his 'Anointed Conqueror', 59:21; 61:1. משח is used only in 61:1; in addition, 1QIs[a] reads משחתי ('I anointed') in Is. 52:14 instead of מִשְׁחַת. See Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 13.

[36]Motyer, *ibid*; O. Eissfeldt, 'The Promises of Grace to David in Isaiah 55:1-5' in Anderson and Harrelson (eds.), *Israel's Prophetic Heritage*, 206. Eissfeldt relates Is. 55 to Ps. 89 and to 'the mission of Israel in the world'. For a discussion of חַסְדֵי דָוִד see H.G.M. Williamson, '"The Sure Mercies of David": Subjective or Objective Genitive?', *JSS* 23 (1978) 31-49; and W.C. Kaiser, Jr., 'The Unfailing Kindnesses Promised to David: Isaiah 55.3', *JSOT* 45 (1989) 91-98. For a discussion of בְּרִית עָם, see J.J. Stamm, 'B[e]rit 'am bei Deuterojesaja' in H.W. Wolff (ed.), *Probleme biblischer Theologie* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1971) 510-24; and M.S. Smith, 'Berit 'am / Berit 'olam. A New Proposal for the Crux of Isa 42.6' *JBL* 100 (1981) 241-43. ברית is also used in 56:4, 6; 59:21 and 61:8.

literary contexts. (Mettinger has challenged us not to be 'Duhmed' by that influential German commentary published more than a century ago to study the Servant Songs in isolation from their context.)[37] For example, the initial section of Isaiah which emphasizes the King, chs. 6-11, is preceded immediately by a description of Israel being plunged into darkness (5:30) due to their own perversion (5:20), an image which is repeated in 8:22 before announcing that light is dawning in Galilee of the Gentiles (9:2 [1]) in connection with the birth of the future ruler. According to 42:6-7, it is the task of Yahweh's Servant to bring light to the Gentiles and release for those in darkness (*cf.* 42:16 and 49:6, 9 and 61:1). In the final section of the book, the people confess that they walk in darkness because of their sin (59:9-10; contrast 58:8, 10), before the prophet announces the dawning of light (60:1-3), since Yahweh will be the people's everlasting light (60:19-20; *cf.* 62:1).[38] A second and related theme linking the King and the Servant is the motif of blindness/sight, as well as deafness/ hearing (6:9; 29:9-10, 18; 30:10-11; 32:3-4; 33:23; 35:5-6; 42:7, 18-20; 43:8; 44:18; 59:10). The prophet is told that the people's dulled senses will prevent them from understanding and repenting (6:9) until the future king reigns in righteousness (32:3-4). Similarly, the Servant is sent 'to open eyes that are blind' (42:7).[39]

A final theme in Isaiah which links the work of the King and the Servant is that of the 'Autobahn of the return' (11:16; 19:23; 35:8; 40:3; 42:16; 43:19; 49:11; 57:14; 58:11; 62:10). The reign of the coming

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[37]T.N.D. Mettinger, 'Die Ebed-Jahwe-Lieder. Ein fragwürdiges Axiom', *ASTI* 11 (1978) 68-78; *idem*, *A Farewell to the Servant Songs. A Critical Examination of an Exegetical Axiom* (Lund: Gleerup, 1983). Of course, Mettinger was not the first to reject Duhm's isolation of the 'Servant Songs' from their context. See K. Budde, *Die sogenannten Ebed-Jahwe-Lieder und die Bedeutung des Knechtes Jahwes in Jes. 40-55. Ein Minoritätsvotum* (Giessen: J. Ricker'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1900) 38; and O. Kaiser, *Der Königliche Knecht. Eine traditionsgeschichtlich-exegetische Studie über die Ebed-Jahwe-Lieder bei Deuterojesaja* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959) 10.

[38]Here is not the place to discuss the number and extent of the 'Servant Songs'. For a helpful survey of the issue, see North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah*, ch. 7, especially 127-38; and Haag, *Der Gottesknecht bei Deuterojesaja*, 4-8. If these texts are attributed to the author of Is. 40ff. and not studied in isolation from their literary contexts, the question becomes academic. In any case, there is sufficient warrant to interpret 42:6-7, 49:6,9 and possibly even 61:1 as referring to the work of the Servant. Kellermann, *Messias und Gesetz*, 43, also notes these parallels and sees Is. 42:6 as a conscious 'echo' (Anklang) of 9:2 [Heb. v.1].

[39]For a more detailed study of this theme, see Aitken, 'Hearing and Seeing', and R.E. Clements, 'Patterns in the Prophetic Canon: Healing the Blind and the Lame' in G.M. Tucker, D.L. Petersen, R.R. Wilson (eds.), *Canon, Theology, and Old Testament Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 189-200.

Ruler in Isaiah 11 will be marked not only by comprehensive peace (vv. 6-9) but also by the return 'of the remnant of his people' via this highway (11:16, *cf.* v. 11 'in that day'). This theme is also prominent in the Servant section, being introduced again in 40:3. Presumably the captives to whom the Servant proclaims release (49:9a) will be those led along the highways which Yahweh will build (49:9b-12). Since it is clearly Yahweh in 40:9-11 who returns to Zion leading his 'flocks' along the prepared highway (40:3-5), the verbal parallel between 40:10b and 62:11c (הִנֵּה שְׂכָרוֹ אִתּוֹ וּפְעֻלָּתוֹ לְפָנָיו; 'See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him'), and the fact that 63:1 picks up key terms of 62:11 (בָּא מֵאֱדוֹם... רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ, *cf.* הִנֵּה יִשְׁעֵךְ בָּא), suggest that it is Yahweh who is both the Saviour and Conqueror.[40]

These verbal and thematic links raise the question of whether the Servant is himself a kingly figure. Several scholars have suggested that this is, in fact, the case, even though they do not necessarily identify this figure with the Messiah. Van Groningen points out that, although there are no direct references to the Servant 'as a specifically royal figure', he is described as having 'royal prerogatives and characteristics', for example in 49:7b: 'Kings will see you and rise up, princes will see and bow down...'[41] Kellermann interprets 49:1-6 as the transfer of the royal judicial office of Isaiah 11:4 to the Servant.[42] Otto Kaiser similarly speaks of the 'royal Servant' (der königliche Knecht), and Engnell states emphatically: 'We need not speak of 'Ebed Yahweh as a "parallel figure" of Messiah... Ebed Yahweh is the Messiah himself, the Saviour king of the dynasty of David waited for.'[43] (One might also note here that king David is designated as Yahweh's servant in 37:35.)

Is the future King of Isaiah 1-39 the same person as the Servant of chs. 40ff.? In the light of our investigation, it is wrong to claim that these two portraits are completely independent of each other. Rather,

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[40]Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr,* considers these strategically located references to the highway as intentional redactional sutures from the post-exilic period. If, however, one follows Delitzsch's analysis of Is. 40-66 as consisting of three enneads of chapters (40-48, 49-57, 58-66), then the highway motif is found at the beginning of the first, the end of the second, and the middle of the third ennead.
[41]Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation*, 611.
[42]Kellermann, *Messias und Gesetz,* 43. He, however, understands the Servant as Israel, *not* the Messiah.
[43]O. Kaiser, *Der königliche Knecht;* and I. Engnell, 'The 'Ebed Yahweh Songs and the Suffering Messiah in "Deutero-Isaiah"', *BJRL* 31 (1948) 58. However, Kaiser, *ibid.,* 134, sees in the Servant the 'revolutionary transfer of the task of kingship to the people', and Engnell sees in 'Second Isaiah' a prophetic imitation of a liturgy for the annual festival of the royal rites.

a number of thematic, verbal, and contextual indicators suggest that the two are not only to be compared with each other but also are integrally related, if not identified. The King and the Servant share similar descriptions and similar tasks in the book of Isaiah. There is considerable warrant for viewing the Servant as a royal personage. The Servant is involved in establishing justice (42:3-4), kings arise and princes bow down before him (49:7, *cf.* 52:15), and he divides spoil among the mighty (53:12).

Why is the Servant not more clearly identified as King here? There might be a structural reason. In Isaiah 1-39, the kings of Israel and Judah repeatedly are portrayed as failing to trust in Yahweh, bringing the people under God's judgment. The solution is a future King who will delight in the fear of the LORD (11:3). In Wegner's assessment,

> each of the so-called 'messianic' passages reveal a special emphasis necessary to the complete picture of the messianic expectation displayed by these passages: (b) Isaiah 8-9 emphasizes that a remnant of righteous ones will be saved and delivered from the Assyrians. (c) Isaiah 11 emphasizes the nature and the effects which the future deliverer/ruler will have upon the nation of Israel. (d) Isaiah 32:1-8 emphasizes what the kingdom will be like which the future deliverer/ruler will establish.[44]

At the end of Isaiah 1-39, Israel and Judah have been devastated by Assyria and the Babylonian captivity has been announced.

The focus then shifts away from the future Davidic king to the Persian king Cyrus who will provide political deliverance to exiled Israel (40-48). In Van Groningen's assessment, this constitutes a further indictment of the house of David: 'an unknown foreigner, not one of David's own dynasty, will represent and serve Yahweh'.[45] He is compared and contrasted (note the juxtaposed descriptions in chs. 41 and 42) with the Servant who will provide spiritual deliverance (chs. 49-57). Both Cyrus and the Servant are called in righteousness (41:2; 42:6), by name (45:4; 49:1), are grasped by the hand (45:1; 42:6), and

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[44]Wegner, *An Examination of Kingship*, 300. Wegner also includes Is. 7:14 among the messianic passages but excludes 16:5.

[45]Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation*, 594. Antti Laato, *The Servant of YHWH and Cyrus. A Reinterpretation of the Exilic Messianic Programme in Isaiah 40-55* (CBOT 35; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992) 241, states similarly: 'A number of passages assign tasks which are otherwise associated with the Messiah to Cyrus or the servant.'

accomplish Yahweh's will (using חפץ: 44:28; 53:10). Since the Servant is called to perform a spiritual ministry on behalf of Israel, his kingly features fade into the background. In chs. 40-48, Cyrus is Yahweh's 'Messiah' (45:1, *cf*. 61:1), but he offers only a temporary solution to Israel's problem. In chs. 49-57 the Suffering Servant emerges as the only solution for a recalcitrant people. As McKenzie describes it, the Servant is 'another savior figure who accomplishes his work by entirely opposite means: by prophetic proclamation, by teaching, and finally by atoning suffering and death.'[46]

Thus the 'Servant' of Isaiah 40 ff. can be understood as a complementary portrait of Yahweh's agent, which corresponds to the King of Isaiah 1-39. The similarities suggest this correspondence, while the differences reflect the emphases of their respective sections within the chronological and thematic development of the book of Isaiah as a whole. The King is described in chs. 9, 11, 16, and 32 primarily as one whose reign upon David's throne will be characterized by justice and peace. That his rule will involve more than political stability is implied by 11:9 ('the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD'), possibly involving the spiritual transformation of the people (32:3-5), and that it will affect the nations as well is mentioned in 11:10, but the major focus is on the fact that this future Ruler will carry out his responsibilities with a fidelity that was lacking in Judah's contemporary kings.

That the Servant has a task to perform for the nations as a whole, and not just for Israel, is a prominent theme in Isaiah 40ff. (42:1, 4; 49:6; 52:15—depending on the translation of יַזֶּה). Though the Servant, like the King, establishes justice, he also is described as returning Jacob to God (49:5, לְשׁוֹבֵב יַעֲקֹב אֵלָיו), bringing 'salvation to the ends of the earth' (49:6, 8, using יְשׁוּעָה, a term that is lacking in the 'King' passages), and suffering in the process (50:6; 52:14; 53:3, 7). He does not simply rule but also brings a message that will encourage (50:4; *cf*. 61:1-3) and that, having borne their guilt, he will make many just (53:11, יַצְדִּיק...לָרַבִּים). This stunning development in comparison with chs. 1-39 marks a major turning point in the book of Isaiah's presentation of what must take place before Zion can be exalted (2:2; *cf*. 1:26 and 65:18).

[46]McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, xlviii. For helpful summaries of the New Testament use of the Servant passages, see R.T. France, 'The Servant of the Lord in the Teaching of Jesus', *TynB* 19 (1968) 26-52; H.W. Wolff, *Jesaja 53 im Urchristentum* (3rd ed; Berlin: Evangelischer Verlags-Anstalt, 1952); and G.W. Grogan, 'The New Testament and the Messianism of the Book of Isaiah',*Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 3 (1985) 1-12.

IV. The King and the Anointed Conqueror

Motyer has noted some striking parallels between the Servant and the 'Anointed Conqueror', although his selection of precisely four texts as describing this 'Anointed Conqueror' (59:21; 61:1-3; 61:10-62:7; 63:1-6) could be questioned.[47] These passages do, however, contain some common elements: 59:21 and 61:1-3 share the mention of the Spirit and the word; 61:1-3 and 63:1-6 share the announcement of vengeance; and 61:10-62:7 and 63:1-6 share the message of salvation. Is there any explicit relationship between the King and the 'Anointed Conqueror' in the book of Isaiah? Both portraits describe this person as adjudicating on behalf of the needy (9:4 [3]; 11:4a; 61:1) and as slaying the wicked (11:4b; 63:6), although the imagery in ch. 11 is judicial while the imagery in ch. 63 is clearly more militaristic. However, these similarities are not sufficient to equate these two figures or to demonstrate the messianic identity of the 'Conqueror'.

One key theme in Isaiah which links the final section with the rest of the book is the completion of the motif of comfort (using נחם—1:24; 12:1; 22:4; 40:1; 49:13; 51:3, 12, 19; 52:9; 54:11; 61:2; 66:13). The Spirit-anointed messenger has come 'to comfort all who mourn' (61:2). Yahweh's comfort for His people, as Rendtorff has noted, has been *promised* at strategic points throughout the book, such as in 12:1, 40:3, 49:13, and 52:9, but here Yahweh specifically anoints one to *carry out* this task.[48] One must ask, however, whether it is legitimate to identify the victorious conqueror (more likely Yahweh) who speaks in the first person in Isaiah 63:1-6 with the one who is addressed in 59:21 and the first-person speakers in 61:1-3 and 61:10-62:7, as Motyer claims. Perhaps it is time to revive the earlier view that 61:1ff. represents an additional Servant text![49] Thus interpreted, Isaiah 61 continues the portrayal of the Servant who is commissioned not simply to proclaim Yahweh's good favour (רָצוֹן, v. 2, *cf.* 60:10 and 49:8) perhaps resulting from the Servant's vicarious work on Israel's behalf (*cf.* 42:7 and 49:9

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[47]Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 14-16. See discussion in n. 6.

[48]See R. Rendtorff, 'Zur Komposition des Buches Jesaja', 298-300, 315-17.

[49]See W.W. Cannon, 'Isaiah 61,1-3 an Ebed Jahweh poem', *ZAW* 47 (1929): 284-88. Haag, *Der Gottesknecht bei Deuterojesaja*, 6, lists in addition the following scholars who treat Is. 61:1-3 as a 'Servant Song': Hengstenberg, Delitzsch, von Orelli, Cheyne, Torrey, and Procksch (also Lassalle who limits the passage to 61:1, 2aα). See also S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (2nd ed; New York: Charles Scribener's Sons, 1916) 235-36. It is legitimate to distinguish between *proclaiming* Yahweh's 'day of vengeance' (קרא, 61:1) and having the 'day of vengeance' *in one's heart*, and therefore being filled with wrath (63:3-4).

with 61:1), but also to announce Yahweh the Conqueror's day of vengeance (v. 2, *cf.* 59:15b-20 and 63:1-6), thereby comforting the mourners.

If it truly was the intention or concern of the author/editor of the final section of Isaiah to associate the King of Isaiah 1-39 with any other figure, such as a 'Conqueror', he missed a golden opportunity in 65:25 which consists of a modified summary of the climactic description of the results of the messianic reign from Isaiah 11:6-9, the familiar 'lion and the lamb' passage. Much could be said about the differences in wording between the two texts and their significance.[50] More important, however, are the differences in context. In Isaiah 11, justice for the poor, pervasive peace, and the restoration of the nation are all the achievements of the future righteous Ruler. In ch. 65, however, there is no trace of the King. As Grogan puts it, the Christian reader must ask himself: 'Where is his beloved Savior in these closing chapters?'[51] However, this is simply in keeping with the basic portrayal of Yahweh's dominant role in Israel's present and future affairs throughout the entire book of Isaiah.

There is also a possible thematic explanation for the lack of reference to the messianic King in the closing chapters of Isaiah. The dominant theme of the book of Isaiah is not the Messiah but Zion's present sinful state and future glorification, as Barry Webb's literary analysis and Christopher Seitz's tradition-historical analysis have demonstrated convincingly.[52] Isaiah 1:25 announces Yahweh's intent to purge Zion through judgment, while 2:1-4 looks to the distant future when Zion will be exalted and the nations will journey there to receive

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[50]For a further discussion of this parallel see J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, 'The Intertextual Relationship Between Isaiah 65,25 and Isaiah 11,6-9' in F. García Martínez, A. Hilhurst, and C.J. Labuschagne (eds.), *The Scriptures and the Scrolls.* (Leiden: Brill, 1992) 31-42; W. Lau, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie in Jes 56-66. Eine Untersuchung zu den literarischen Bezügen in den letzten elf Kapiteln des Jesajabuches* (BZAW 225; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), 134-42; Steck, '"Ein kleiner Knabe kann sie leiten": Beobachtungen zum Tierfrieden in Jesaja 11,6-8 und 65,25' in J. Hausmann und H.-J. Zobel (eds.), *Alttestamentlicher Glaube und biblische Theologie* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992) 104-13; and Schultz, *The Search for Quotation.* Most recent commentators view Is. 65:25 as a summary quotation of Is. 11:6-9 rather than Is. 11:6-9 as an expanded quotation of 65:25.

[51]Grogan, 'Isaiah', *The Expositor's Bible Commentary,* Vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) 349.

[52]B.G. Webb, 'Zion in Transformation. A Literary Approach to Isaiah' in D.J.A. Clines, S.E. Fowl and S.A. Porter (eds.), *The Bible in Three Dimensions* (JSOTS 87; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990) 65-84; C.R. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny: The Development of the Book of Isaiah: A Reassessment of Isaiah 36-39* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 205.

Yahweh's instruction and seek his mediation. This theme of Zion is developed further in the course of the book. Since Zion's rulers are 'rebels' (1:23), Yahweh will raise up a righteous Ruler who will not tolerate such corruption. However, since the people will remain rebellious from beginning to end (1:2; 66:24, both using פשׁע), more than a righteous Ruler is needed—a Servant who will carry out all that Yahweh desires, even to the extent of suffering for the people's sins (53:11-12) and interceding for them as a righteous one. But there is also a task for a Conqueror to carry out, trampling down the nations in his anger in order to establish justice on earth (63:1-6). Cyrus' subjugation of the nations was only temporary and penultimate in God's plan (41:2, 25); the wicked nations must be permanently subdued if Zion ultimately is to be glorified.

The two prominent figures in the book of Isaiah, the King and the Servant, share a common endowment with the Spirit and a common goal, that of bringing about righteousness and salvation. They are also connected by various thematic and verbal links. Both these roles corresponds to a different stage in the development of the needs of God's people, or, to state it differently, to a key theme in a major section of the book of Isaiah. As we have seen, there is reason enough to view the King and the Servant not as two completely separate figures but as one messianic royal figure carrying out various tasks on Israel's behalf, even though we did not find a sufficient textual basis for concluding that the Conqueror of Is. 63:1-6 is also a messianic figure, rather than Yahweh himself.[53] When the tasks of the King/ Servant are accomplished, Yahweh himself will bring about the final conquest of the nations and the climactic restoration and the glorious exaltation of Zion, just as announced in Isaiah 2. The book thus ends as it begins: without any direct reference to a messianic mediator.

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[53]The book of Revelation does apply the imagery of Is. 63 to Jesus Christ. However, there are many cases in the New Testament in which actions ascribed to Yahweh in the Old Testament are ascribed to Jesus in the New Testament. The New Testament appropriation of the Old Testament must be taken into consideration but cannot be a determinative factor in interpreting Old Testament texts. For a discussion of the use of Is. 63:1-6 in Revelation 14:19-20 and 19:13,15, see J. Fekkes III, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation. Visionary Antecedents and their Development* (JSNTS 93; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994) 195-99. The same passage in Revelation 19 also alludes to Is. 11:4; see Fekkes, 117-22.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, let us return to the quotation of Is. 11:6-9 in 65:25. Despite the different contexts of this verbal parallel which already have been noted, there is also a thematic similarity between Isaiah 11 and 65. Is. 11:4 speaks about judging the poor and the meek with righteousness, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, announces the slaying of the wicked. Isaiah 65:1-16 likewise describes a separation of the servants from the wicked: the wicked will perish, the servants will be blessed. The recontextualization of Isaiah 11:6-9, placing the promise of pervasive peace in the context of Yahweh's eschatological re-creation of the new heavens and new earth, should be viewed not as a reinterpretation of the initial promise but as a clarification of its scope and the circumstances surrounding its fulfilment. This reuse of a segment of a 'King text' from Isaiah 6-11 serves to render illegitimate any non-messianic interpretation which sees in Isaiah 11 simply a reform movement brought about by a good contemporary king. The fulfilment of Isaiah 11:6-9 is thus placed chronologically beyond the events surrounding the eighth century Assyrian crisis and the later Babylonian exile, the political deliverance of Cyrus, the spiritual deliverance of the Servant, and the vengeance of the divine Conqueror. The paradisical conditions, free from any covenantal curse, are the results of Yahweh's direct intervention in history and not dependent on any human efforts. Nevertheless, we are reminded by the original context of the 'lion and lamb' promise that these benefits will be administered by the messianic King.[54] In response to our initial question—Why is there no throne in Isaiah 65-66?—we would conclude, in the light of our investigation: Indeed there is a throne in Isaiah 65-66, but it is *Yahweh*, not the *Messiah*, who is sitting on it!

> This is what the LORD says: 'Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool.' (Is. 66:1)

What are the implications of this study for our understanding of the Messiah within the Old Testament, as a whole and the book of Isaiah in particular? First of all, the significance of the Messiah within the book of Isaiah should not be overstated. Considerable attention has

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[54]Grogan, 'Isaiah', 351, correctly notes: 'Verse 25, taken almost entirely from 11:6-9, is a reminder that these blessings come only through the Messiah.' Miscall's interpretation, *Isaiah* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 146, that 'the attributes or work of the shoot in Isa 11:1-5 have been transferred to the servant(s), the chosen…', is unwarranted.

been devoted to the New Testament quotations of messianic passages in Isaiah, especially from ch. 53, and rightly so. However, the King or Servant (as the Messiah is presented in Isaiah) is merely Yahweh's agent whose role is subordinate to the divine purposes for Israel and the nations. Yahweh is Israel's true king of the nations, regardless of the means employed to accomplish this end: purging through judgement and installing righteous rulers, forgiving sin and transforming the people, destroying the wicked and conquering his foes. The sending of the Messiah is first and foremost a demonstration of God's sovereignty. The Messiah's prime responsibility is to do Yahweh's will (11:3; 42:1; 53:10). His achievements may be great, but it must be remembered that it is 'the zeal of the LORD Almighty' that accomplishes this (9:7 [6]).

Secondly, we have argued that the King and the Servant are not diverse, even conflicting, messianic portraits within the book of Isaiah. (The assertion that Isaiah contains a third messianic portrait, an 'Anointed Conqueror', has been rejected.) To the contrary, their descriptions and duties are so similar that the two may be identified. The historical-critical separation between Isaiah 1-39 and 40 ff. and the often atomizing approach of evangelicals toward individual messianic prophecies as isolated 'high-points of divine revelation', have caused many scholars to overlook these similarities. The 'King' is an appropriate messianic designation in chs. 1-39 in contrast to the frail and flawed contemporary kings of Judah and Israel; the 'Servant' is an appropriate messianic designation in chs. 40ff. in contrast to Israel, God's intended servant, who is so 'blind and deaf' (41:8-9; 42:1, 19-20; 43:3, 5-6) that another Servant must be sent to bring him back (49:5). (Interestingly, Cyrus is never clearly identified in Isaiah as God's servant, though he is called 'shepherd', 44:28, and 'Yahweh's anointed', 45:1) That the achievements of the 'Servant' go beyond those of the 'King' is a consequence of the very different literary context of this portrait, not an indication of disjunction.

Finally, messianic passages should be studied not simply in terms of the particular stage which they represent within the progressive revelation of God's plan for mankind but also in terms of their integration within and contribution to the thematic development and message of a particular canonical book. The book of Isaiah begins with Yahweh's indictment of his rebellious people(1:2) and ends with his creation of new heavens and a new earth (65:17; 66:22). The 'sinful nation' must be punished for its apostasy (1:4-6) and 'purged of its dross' (1:22, 25). When a future Ruler finally arrives who will establish

justice, the 'wicked' who will be slain certainly will include those who belong to God's people (11:4). In the light of the extensive portrayal of Judah's sins in chs. 6-11 and 28-33, the coming of the messianic King is as much an act of divine judgement as it is of deliverance. And when a Servant is sent to bear the punishment for the people's rebellion (53:5, 8, פשׁע), since Cyrus' deliverance does not resolve Israel's basic problem, this does not guarantee universal salvation for Israel or the nations. The wicked must forsake his way in order to receive pardon (55:6; *cf.* 1:19-20). Even as the book of Isaiah draws to a close (in the new heavens and new earth?) with all mankind bowing down before Yahweh, those punished for their rebellion against him still will be nearby (66:23-24). The Messiah will be deeply involved in bringing about Zion's final glorification, because Yahweh, the King, is in sovereign control over the destiny of Israel and the nations.

CHAPTER 8

BRINGING BACK DAVID:
EZEKIEL'S MESSIANIC HOPE

Daniel I. Block

Summary

Ezekiel's description of a restored Israel (chs. 34-37), the Gog Oracle (chs. 38-39), and his vision of the reconstituted Temple and environs (chs. 40-48), offer a picture of the future unique in style and unmatched for its detail. But the exilic prophet displays a special interest in the person and role of the Messiah. After noting several general features of Ezekiel's treatment of the subject as a whole, the paper focuses on the two explicitly messianic texts 34:23-24 and 37:22-25. It concludes with a look at the נָשִׂיא *('prince') in the prophet's final vision (chs. 40-48), particularly his role in the restored theological community of Israel.*

I. Introduction

Many readers know the prophet Ezekiel primarily for his fantastic visions and bizarre behaviour. However, in circles where prophecy conferences are in vogue, he is perceived as the Old Testament eschatologist par excellence. His restoration oracles in chs. 34-37, the Gog Oracle in chs. 38-39, and the final vision of the restored Temple and environs in chs. 40-48 offer a picture of Israel's future unique in style and unmatched for its detail. However, the exilic prophet displays a special interest in one particular aspect of Israel's glorious future, the person and role of the Messiah,[1] the subject of this paper. Before we focus on the relevant texts several general features of his treatment of this topic deserve notice.

1. Scarcity of references to the Messiah

Although more than one fourth of Ezekiel's preserved prophecies look forward to Israel's glorious tomorrow, overt references to the Messiah in the book are remarkably few.[2] The topmost crown of the cedar, identified as a רַךְ (sprig, shoot) in 17:22 may serve as a harbinger of the figure to be developed later,[3] but obvious messianic allusions are rare elsewhere in the judgment oracles against Israel/Judah (chs. 4-24) and the oracles against the foreign nations (chs. 25-32).

A second allusion to the Messiah has been recognized in 29:21. In an oracle against a foreign nation (Egypt) and supportive of a foreign king (Nebuchadnezzar), Ezekiel concludes his pronouncement with an enigmatic reference to 'a horn' (קֶרֶן) which Yahweh will cause

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[1]S.H. Levey (*The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation. The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum* [Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1974] xix) defines 'messianism' as '...the predication of a future Golden Age in which the central figure is a king primarily of Davidic lineage appointed by God... It was believed that during the time of the Messiah the Hebrew people will be vindicated, its wrongs righted, the wicked purged from its midst, and its rightful place in the world secured. The Messiah may not always be the active agent in these future events, but his personality must always be present, at least as the symbol of the glorious age which will be ushered in.'

[2]The messianic interpretation of specific texts like Ezekiel 34:23-24 is implicit in LXX and Peshitta, and overt in the Vulgate and the Rabbinic *Genesis Rabbah* 97, but the Targum refuses to recognise the Messiah anywhere in Ezekiel.

[3]LXX omits the word. Compare the horticultural designations for the Messiah elsewhere: חֹטֶר ('shoot') and נֵצֶר ('branch') in Is. 11:1 and צֶמַח ('sprout') in Je. 23:5; 33:15; Zc. 3:8; 6:12. For a recent messianic interpretation of 17:22-24 see Antti Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus: The Historical Josiah and the Messianic Expectations of Exilic and Postexilic Times* (CBOT 33; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992) 154-64.

to sprout (צָמַח) for the house of Israel. Literally, the noun denotes an animal's horn, and is often used synonymously with שׁוֹפָר, though the latter usually refers more specifically to a ram's horn. Since horns are the focus of many creatures' power, קֶרֶן naturally functions figuratively for 'strength'. Accordingly, Yahweh hereby offers hope to the exiles. The fact that the fulfilment of the prophecies against Tyre has been delayed for more than a decade does not mean Yahweh has forgotten his promises to Israel or his debt to Nebuchadnezzar. When the prophet and his people see him settling this outstanding account they may take heart that Yahweh's long-standing account with Israel (albeit of a different nature) will also be settled.

But the issue has another side. The mixed metaphor, in which קֶרֶן is used with צָמַח, occurs in one other text, Psalm 132:17, where Yahweh promises to 'cause a horn to sprout for David'. This link provides the basis for the long-standing messianic interpretation of our text. But most scholars reject the messianic assessment, on the grounds that the idea of a royal messianic deliverance is not important in Ezekiel, and that the notion would in any case be intrusive in this context. However, neither argument is entirely convincing. On the one hand, Ezekiel does in fact make several clear messianic pronouncements; on the other, a reference to a Davidic scion at this point is no more surprising than the presence of the verse itself. Furthermore, since this is Ezekiel's latest recorded oracle, the resurfacing of earlier ideas is not surprising.

Elsewhere messianic hints are scarce. Even in the restoration oracles unequivocal references to the Messiah occur in only two contexts, 34:22-23 and 37:22-25. Some dispute the messianic role of the prince (נָשִׂיא) in chs. 40-48. Only by inference can he be identified as a Davidide, and his role is described in other than royal terms.

2. Reinterpretation of Genesis 49:10 in Ezekiel 21:18-27

At least one earlier text, which was probably interpreted messianically by the people, Ezekiel reconstrues and applies to the contemporary political crisis. The oracle concerning Nebuchadnezzar, the wielder of the divine sword against Judah (21:18-27 [Heb. vv. 23-32]), ends with a sinister reinterpretation of Genesis 49:10, an ancient promise concerning Judah's hegemonic position within Israel.[4] Rereading מִשְׁפָּט, 'right, claim',[5] as 'judgement', the prophet identifies the person to whom the task of 'judgement' is delivered as Nebuchadnezzar. He hereby envisions the imminent fall of Jerusalem, an event in which no Messiah shall interfere. Ezekiel has taken an ancient word, on which

his audience had staked their hopes, and transformed it into a frightening prediction of doom.[6] To Ezekiel Genesis 49:10 is not about tribute and subordination of the world to Judah, but the judgement of Judah by that world's principal representative.[7]

3. *Ezekiel's messianic hope and judgement oracles*

Ezekiel's messianic hope represents the inverse of a fundamental aspect of his judgement oracles. In the face of the Babylonian invasion, Israelite[8] confidence was founded upon an official orthodoxy resting on four immutable propositions, four pillars of divine promise: the irrevocability of Yahweh's covenant with Israel (Sinai), Yahweh's

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[4]The messianic\Christological interpretation of עַד בֹּא אֲשֶׁר לוֹ הַמִּשְׁפָּט וּנְתַתִּיו dates back to LXX ἕως οὗ ἔλθῃ ᾧ καθήκει, 'until the one comes for whom it is fitting', on which see L. Monsengwo-Pasinya, 'Deux textes messianiques de la Septante: Gn. 49,10 et Ez. 21,32', *Biblica* 61 (1980) 356-76. J. Lust, 'Messianism and Septuagint' in J.A. Emerton (ed.), *Congress Volume Salamanca 1983* (VTS 36; Leiden: Brill, 1985) 188-91, interprets the Septuagintal rendering as a 'priestly messianic expectation as opposed to a royal Davidic messianic expectation'. Most Christian interpreters after Jerome have interpreted אֲשֶׁר לוֹ הַמִּשְׁפָּט as a theological interpretation of Shiloh in the patriarchal prophecy. See C.F. Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel* (1882; ET; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950) Vol. I, 305; E.W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament and a Commentary on the Messianic Predictions* (1847; repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970) 687. For more recent proponents of the messianic interpretation see J.B. Taylor, *Ezekiel* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1969) 165; H. Cazelles, 'Shiloh, The Customary Laws and the Return of the Ancient Kings', in J.I. Durham and J.R. Porter (eds.), *Proclamation and Presence* (London: SCM, 1970) 239-51; R.H. Alexander, 'Ezekiel', in F.E. Gaebelein (ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) 844-45; L.E. Cooper, *Ezekiel* (Nashville: Broadman, 1994) 215.

For a non-messianic interpretation of Gn. 49:10 see F. Pili, 'Posibili casi di metatesi in Genesi 49,10 e Salmo 2,11-12a', *Augustinianum* 15 (1975) 457-71, who proposes reversing the letters of שׁילה as הלישׁ, giving the meaning 'Till the lion comes to whom the obedience of the peoples shall belong'; *cf.* Gn. 49:9. B. Lang, *Kein Aufstand in Jerusalem: Die Politik des Propheten Ezechiel* (2nd ed.; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1978) 119, follows A. Caquot, 'La parole sur Juda dans le testament lyrique de Jacob (Genese 49, 8-12)', *Semitica* 26 (1976) 5-32, in recognising in Shiloh an abbreviation for Solomon.

[5]Elsewhere the word means 'justice' (18:5, 19, 21, 27; 33:14, 16, 19), 'judgement' (23:24), 'custom' (23:24), 'design' (42:11). *Cf.* J. Wevers, *Ezekiel* (London: Nelson, 1969) 160; Lust, *Congress Volume Salamanca 1983*, 184-86.

[6]*Cf.* M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) 502-3.

[7]*Cf.* W.L. Moran, 'Gen. 49,10 and its Use in Ez. 21,32', *Biblica* 39 (1958) 424-25.

[8]Like Ezekiel, we use the term Israelite as a theological and ethnic designation for the so-called people of Yahweh, whether they be the original twelve tribes, the kingdom of Judah, or the remnant of exiles.

ownership of the land of Canaan, Yahweh's eternal covenant with David, and Yahweh's residence in Jerusalem, the place he chose for his name to dwell. But Ezekiel's overriding purpose in chs. 4-24 is to transform his audience's perception of their relationship with Yahweh, exposing delusions of innocence, and offering a divine understanding of reality. Deliberately he demolishes the pillars on which official orthodoxy had constructed its notions of eternal security. However, once Jerusalem has fallen and the old illusions of spirituality have been destroyed, the prophet can look forward to a new day, based upon the same immutable promises of Yahweh. The earlier problem with official orthodoxy was not its theological structures but its misapplication of truth. He had been systematic in tearing down the illusory pillars of orthodoxy in his judgement oracles; he would be equally systematic in reconstructing those pillars in his restoration oracles. These reconstruction pronouncements included the reaffirmation of Yahweh's ancient promises to David. In both, the judgement and the restoration, the word of Yahweh is affirmed: not only the immediate word, whose fulfilment confirms Ezekiel's status as a true prophet; but especially the ancient word, declared through Nathan to David in 2 Samuel 7.

4. The Near Eastern context

Ezekiel's messianic vision is at home in the ideological and cultural milieu of ancient Mesopotamia. If his portrayal of the departure of Yahweh from the Temple and the devastating effects of the divine abandonment of the land displays striking links with other Babylonian and Assyrian accounts of divine abandonment, the same is true of his vision of his nation's restoration. In several ancient texts the divine appointment of a human king represents a fundamental element, if not the climax of the normalization of the relationship between a deity and his land/people.[9] Accordingly, Ezekiel's anticipation of a new [messianic] king over his own people would have been understood by ancient Israelite and outsider alike.

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[9]The 'Prophetic Speech of Marduk' II:20ff. (see R. Borger, 'Gott Marduk und Gott-König Sulgi als Propheten: Zwei prophetische Texte', *BiOr* 28 [1971] 3-24); Esarhaddon's account of the rebuilding of Babylon (*ARAB* II, 242-47 §§640-51; R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien*, *AfO* 9 (Graz: E.F. Weidner, 1956) 37 A:16-40); the Prayer of Adad-guppi (*ANET* 560-62); the Cyrus Cylinder (*ANET*, 315). For discussion of these texts in this context see D.I. Block, *The Gods of the Nations: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern National Theology* (ETS Monographs 2; Jackson: Evangelical Theological Society/Eisenbrauns, 1988) 134-48.

5. Ezekiel's nationalistic perspective

Whereas the messianic visions of other prophets were inclusivistic, incorporating peoples and lands beyond Israel, Ezekiel's perspective is narrowly exclusive, parochial, nationalistic. The goal in Yahweh's restorative activity does indeed have international implications, viz., the universal recognition of his person and the vindication of his name, but this will be achieved through the total restoration of Israel. This must necessarily involve the regathering of the population from the lands where they have been scattered, their return to the homeland, which has been physically rejuvenated, and the people's fundamental spiritual revitalisation.[10] Since the territorial transformation envisioned by the exilic prophet does not extend beyond the borders of Israel,[11] naturally his Messiah is also a national ruler.

Having made these preliminary observations we may examine Ezekiel's messianic hope more closely by focusing on the two texts cited earlier, and then make some observations on the role of the נָשִׂיא in the concluding Temple vision.

II. Ezekiel 34:23-24

Ezekiel's first explicit reference to the Messiah occurs near the end of an extended restoration oracle in which Yahweh poses as a benevolent divine shepherd, rescuing his beleaguered human flock from the tyranny of exploitative rulers and bullying members within the flock (34:1-31). Without warning the attention moves from Yahweh's negative activity, viz., resolving problems within the flock, to exciting new positive actions on Israel's behalf, culminating in the appointment of a human shepherd over them and the restoration of peace and security (vv. 23-31).[12] The covenant formula, which summarizes the goal of Yahweh's salvific actions, appears at the beginning (v. 24) and at the end (vv. 30-31), providing a framework for interpreting the intervening material. The two principal motifs dealt with here, the appointment of David as (under-)shepherd of Yahweh's flock, and the covenant of peace, are fundamental to the Jewish messianism that would flourish in the intertestamental period.[13] The repetitious and

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[10]See especially 36:16-38.

[11]A point convincingly argued by K.P. Darr, 'The Wall Around Paradise: Ezekielian Ideas about the Future', *VT* 37 (1987) 271-79.

[12]For the conjunction of these motifs see also Je. 23:1-8; 30:8-11; 33:12-26.

[13]See Levey's definition of 'messianism' in n. 1 above.

staccato style of vv. 23-24 reflects Ezekiel's increasing excitement as he approaches the climax of the oracle. These verses are packed with vital information on the new shepherd's status within Israel.

First, this ruler will be neither self-appointed nor elected by the people, but chosen by Yahweh himself.[14] Like his contemporary Jeremiah, Ezekiel perceives Israel as a theocracy.

Second, the shepherd will be singular. The reference to 'one shepherd' (רֹעֶה אֶחָד) goes beyond Jeremiah 23:4, which has Yahweh installing responsible shepherds (plural) to replace the present exploitative and irresponsible rulers. In announcing a single ruler Yahweh seeks a reversal of the division of Israel into northern and southern kingdoms that occurred after the death of Solomon (1 Ki. 11-12). Like the rest of the prophets, Ezekiel perceived the nation as one and recognized as legitimate only the dynasty reigning from Jerusalem.[15]

Third, the shepherd will be David. Ezekiel's identification of the divinely installed king as David is based on a long-standing prophetic tradition, although this ruler is explicitly identified as David only twice outside this book.[16] On the one hand, the eighth century prophet Hosea had looked forward to the day when the sons of Israel would 'return and seek Yahweh their God and David their king.'[17] On the other, however, Ezekiel's diction is closer to Jeremiah 30:8-10, which also combines the appointment of David with the anticipated restoration of the nation. There is no thought in these prophecies of the

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[14]A principle established already in the 'Mosaic Charter for Kingship', Dt. 17:14-20. הֵקִים ('raise up'), in the sense of 'install in office', with Yahweh as the subject, is applied in the Old Testament to the appointment of prophets (Dt. 18:15, 18; Je. 29:15; Am. 2:11), judges (Judg. 2:16, 18), priests (1 Sa. 2:35), kings (1 Ki. 14:14; Je. 30:9), watchmen (Je. 6:17), deliverers (Judg. 3:9, 15), shepherds (Je. 23:4, 5; Zc. 11:16), and even adversaries (1 Ki. 11:14).

[15]He will expand on this notion in 37:15-24, where the term אֶחָד occurs no fewer than eleven times.

[16]Je. 23:5 speaks of raising up *for* David 'a Righteous Branch' (צֶמַח צַדִּיק, *cf.* 33:15); Am. 9:11 of restoring (הֵקִים) 'the fallen hut *of* David'. Compare Is. 9:6-7 [Heb. vv. 5-6], which speaks of the child upon the throne of David, Is. 11:1, referring to 'a shoot from the stump of Jesse' (חֹטֶר מִגֵּזַע יִשָׁי; *cf.* 'the root of Jesse' [שֹׁרֶשׁ יִשַׁי] in v. 10). W. Gröss, 'Israel's Hope for the Renewal of the State', *JNSL* 14 (1988) 125-26, follows F. Hossfeld, *Untersuchungen zu Komposition und Theologie des Ezekielbuches* (Forschung zur Bibel 20; Würzburg: Echter, 1977) 230ff. and 284ff., in deleting the reference to David as a late intrusion, dependent upon Ezk. 37:24-25.

[17]The statement is commonly deleted as a late Judaean insertion. *Cf.* W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 219; H.W. Wolff, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974) 63. For a contrary opinion see F.I. Andersen and D.N. Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1980) 307.

resurrection of the historic king, as some kind of David *redivivus*. Ezekiel's use of the singular 'shepherd' and his emphasis on אֶחָד ('one') also preclude the restoration of the dynasty in the abstract, that is simply a series of kings. He envisions a single person, who may perhaps embody the dynasty, but who occupies the throne himself.

Although Ezekiel's hope of a divinely appointed shepherd king in the context of national restoration agrees with common Near Eastern thinking, his specific prediction of a revival of the nation's original royal house[18] contrasts with the general nature of extra-Israelite expectations.[19] Having earlier foretold and witnessed the fall of the Davidic house (ch. 17), Ezekiel now declares its restoration. His pronouncement is based upon Yahweh's covenant with David, announced by Nathan the prophet in 2 Samuel 7:8 [1 Chr. 17:7]. Significantly for our discussion, David's divine election had earlier been described as a call 'from the pasture (נָוֶה), from following the flock, to be ruler (נָגִיד) of Yahweh's people Israel.'[20] Yahweh's affirmation of the eternality of the Davidic covenant[21] had provided the basis for all the prophetic hopes.[22] However, the capture of Zede-

[18]Excluding the failed Saulide experiment.

[19]The *ex eventu* reference to Cyrus with the archaic title 'King of Elam' in the 'Dynastic Prophecy', provides the nearest analogue. *Cf.* A.K. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975) 24-37. The 'Prophetic Speech of Marduk' (II:19-34) refers to the promised king simply as 'a king of Babylon'. For the text see Block, *The Gods of the Nations*, 172; T. Longman III, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1991) 234. Other 'Akkadian Prophecies' define the tenures of a series of kings, but refer to them generically as *šārru*. *Cf.* A.K. Grayson and W.G. Lambert, 'Akkadian Prophecies', *JCS* 18 (1964) 12-14.

[20]Note the popular awareness of David's divine election reflected in 2 Sa. 5:2: 'Yahweh said to you, "You will shepherd (תִרְעֶה) my people Israel, and you will be a ruler (נָגִיד) over Israel"'. Compare the psalmist's celebration of the same notion in Ps. 78:70-72:

> He chose David, his servant,
> and took him from the sheepfolds.
> From caring for the nursing ewes he brought him
> to tend (לִרְעוֹת) Jacob, his people,
> Israel his own possession.
> He tended (רָעָה) them with integrity of heart;
> With his skilful hands he led them.

[21]The word עוֹלָם appears eight times in 2 Sa. 7:13, 16, 24-29. See especially v. 13 ('I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever') and v. 16 ('Your dynasty and your kingdom will endure before me forever; your kingdom will be established forever').

[22]A fact reflected most clearly in Je. 33:17, 20-21, 25-26, but enthusiastically celebrated by the psalmist in Ps. 89:29-30, 34-37 [Heb. vv. 28-29, 33-36].

kiah and the collapse of the Davidic house in 586 BC raised doubts about Yahweh's ability and/or will to keep his word. Ezekiel hereby announces that the ancient promise has not been forgotten. Yahweh will fulfil his irrevocable promise and his unfailing covenant to the house of David as the sole legitimate dynasty in Israel.

Fourth, the shepherd will be the servant of Yahweh. Ezekiel's repetition of עַבְדִּי ('my servant') simultaneously presents an intentional contrast with the self-seeking shepherds of vv. 1-10 and recalls the traditional view of David's willing subordination to Yahweh.[23] Moreover, in the Old Testament עֶבֶד יהוה ('servant of Yahweh') also functioned as an honorific title for those who stood in an official relationship to God, often with the implication of a special election to a task.[24] David's own standing is expressed most clearly by Yahweh himself, who identifies him as 'David my servant, whom I have chosen' (1 Ki. 11:34).

Fifth, the shepherd will be a נָשִׂיא ('prince') in the midst of his people. Ezekiel's use of the archaic title נָשִׂיא contrasts with Hosea and Jeremiah, who had both spoken explicitly of 'David their king'. However, it is consistent with his efforts elsewhere to downplay the roles of Israel's monarchs,[25] and harks back to 1 Ki. 11:34, where it is said of Solomon, 'I will make him prince (נָשִׂיא) all the days of his life for the sake of David my servant.' In chs. 40-48 Ezekiel will apply the title to the official sponsor and patron of the cult, but usually the term functions primarily as a political designation. Ezekiel's preference for נָשִׂיא over מֶלֶךְ ('king'), the normal designation for Israel's rulers, is not

[23] עֶבֶד is used of David thirty-one times in the Old Testament. See 2 Sa. 3:18; 7:5, 8, 26; *etc.* (see BDB, 714). The title is also applied to Hezekiah (2 Ch. 32:16), Zerubbabel (Hg. 2:23), and 'my servant the Branch' (Zc. 3:8; *cf.* 6:12).

[24] Accordingly the patriarchs served as the bearers of the divine revelation, promise and blessing (Abraham, Gn. 26:24 and Ps. 105:6, 42; Isaac, Gn. 24:14 and 1 Ch. 16:13; Jacob, Ex. 32:13 and Dt. 9:27); Moses served as Yahweh's agent of deliverance and the mediator of the divine covenant (so designated forty times: Ex. 14:31; Jos. 1:2, 3, 13, 15; Nu. 12:7-8, *etc.*); the Levitical singers performed as official benedictors for Yahweh (Ps. 113:1; 134:1; 135:1) and the prophets functioned as Yahweh's officially commissioned spokespersons (Ezk. 38:17; 2 Ki. 17:13; Dn. 9:6, *etc.*). For references see BDB, 714. Even the non-Israelite Job was a servant of Yahweh, modelling the divine ideals of piety and (unwittingly) functioning as a vehicle through whom the pattern of divine-human relationships was vindicated before Satan (Jb. 1:8; 2:3; 42:7-8).

[25] Compare the use of the term in 7:27; 12:10, 12; 19:1; 21:12, 25 [Heb. vv. 17, 30]; 22:6; 26:16; 27:21; 30:13; 32:29; 37:25; 38:2, 3; 39:1, 18. Except for the reference to Jehoiachin as מֶלֶךְ in 17:12, and David in 37:22-24, Ezekiel reserves this title for foreign kings of Egypt, Babylon, and Tyre.

intended to deny this person's true kingship but to highlight the distinction between him and the recent occupants of the office. The prophet emphasizes the ruler's identification with the people by noting that he will not only be 'prince over Israel' (v. 23),[26] but 'prince in their midst'. Officially the נָשִׂיא may be 'the promoted one',[27] but in view of his presence in the midst of (בְּתוֹךְ) Israel, some view him simply as *primus inter pares*.[28] One may perhaps recognize here an ironical allusion to Deuteronomy 17:19-20, which had prescribed for Israel's kings the reading of the Torah 'to prevent their hearts from being exalted about their kinsfolk.' However, both his status as shepherd among sheep and the expression 'prince over them' suggest authority as well as identification.[29] In this arrangement, Yahweh is the divine patron of the people; David is his representative and deputy.

Ezekiel's announcement of the appointment of a new David for Israel was intended to instill new hope in the hearts of the exiles. Contrary to appearance, the demise of the Davidic house in 586 BC did not reflect divine impotence or indifference to previous commitments. These events had not only fulfilled previous prophetic utterances;[30] they set the stage for a dramatic and new act of Yahweh. The decadence of the old order had been removed; now the people are challenged to look forward to a new day when Yahweh's Davidic servant will be reinstated in accordance with his eternal and irrevocable covenant.

The texts from Hosea and Jeremiah cited above hinted at an inseparable link between the election of David and the status of Israel as the people of Yahweh.[31] A similar development is evident in 34:24, which ties Yahweh's national covenant with Israel to the dynastic covenant with David. Indeed a comparison of the national covenant formula and Ezekiel's statement suggests that the prophet perceives the appointment of David as נָשִׂיא as an aspect of the fulfilment of the

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[26]*Cf.* 'princes of Israel' in 19:1; *etc.*
[27]נָשִׂיא derives from נָשָׂא ('lift up'). Except for 7:27, when Ezekiel juxtaposes נָשִׂיא with the people of the land, the term refers to the king (45:16, 22; 46:2-3, 8-9). For studies of the word see E. Hammershaimb, *Some Aspects of Old Testament Prophecy from Isaiah to Malachi* (Teologiske Skrifter 4; Copenhagen: Rosenkinde og Bagger, 1966) 54; J.D. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48* (HSM 10: Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1976) 55-74; H. Niehr, *'nasi'* in *TWAT* 5.648; Iain M. Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel* (VTS 56 (Leiden: Brill, 1994) 10-18.
[28]So Hossfeld, *Untersuchungen*, 272.
[29]So also Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel*, 49.
[30]12:1-16; 17; 19.
[31]Both Ho. 3:5 and Je. 30:9-10 speak of 'Yahweh their God and David their king'.

national pledge, 'I will be your God and you shall be my people.' The echo of the first line of this covenant is obvious in the first statement of v. 24.[32] Reminiscence of line 2 will be delayed until v. 30. But how is Ezekiel's assertion that 'My servant David will be prince among them', related to this formula? The answer is found in the prepositional expression, בְּתוֹכָם ('in their midst'), which recalls an auxiliary affirmation often viewed as a part of the covenant formula, 'I will dwell in your midst.'[33] For Ezekiel, the prince is more than a political or military functionary, effecting the restoration; his role begins after the restoration has been achieved by God, at his initiative, and in his time.[34] In short, he symbolizes the presence of Yahweh in the midst of his people.

The messianic promise of David the prince taking his place among the people of Israel is sealed with an expanded version of the divine self-introductory formula. The statement is deliberately inserted to reinforce confidence in the present prophetic pronouncement and Yahweh's irrevocable commitment to David, the promise celebrated in Ps. 89:33-37 [34-38]. Accordingly, Yahweh's restoration of his flock and the appointment of David is not motivated primarily by pity for the bruised and battered sheep of Israel, but from his covenant with his people (cf. Dt. 4:31). The goal of the restoration is the reestablishment of that covenant in its full force and scope. The Messiah, who will function as a servant of Yahweh and symbol of the new reality must come from the house of David, a theme to be developed more fully in 37:15-28.

III. Ezekiel 37:22-25

The second reference to the restoration of the Davidic dynasty occurs in the interpretation of a sign act involving two pieces of wood on which are inscribed the names Judah and Joseph. Ezekiel is instructed to unite these two sticks as a symbolic gesture promising the eventual reunification of all the tribes of Israel in one nation (37:16-28). The interpretation proper (vv. 21-28) offers an anthology of Ezekielian restoration ideas,[35] bringing his salvation oracles to a fitting conclu-

[32]Compare וַאֲנִי יהוה אֶהְיֶה לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים ('And I, Yahweh, shall be their God', v. 24) with Ezekiel's version of the formula: וַאֲנִי/אָנֹכִי אֶהְיֶה לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים (14:11; 36:28; 37:23, 27).
[33]*Cf.* Gen. 17:7; Ex. 29:45-46; Lv. 26:12-13; *etc.*
[34]*Cf.* A. Caquot, 'Le messianisme d'Ezechiel', *Semitica* 14 (1964) 18-19.

sion. This verbal explanation divides into two parts (vv. 21-24a; 24b-28), each with its own covenant formula (vv. 23, 27): vv. 21-24a are preoccupied with the reunification of the nation under one king; vv. 24b-28 with the eternality of Yahweh's restorative acts. Accordingly, the specification of one shepherd over all of Israel in v. 24a belongs to the preceding, rather than that which follows, and the identification of David as מֶלֶךְ ('king') in v. 24a ties in with the use of the same word in v. 22, but contrasts with Ezekiel's preferred designation for Israel's rulers, נָשִׂיא in v. 25. This division of vv. 21-28 results in two panels of approximately equal length.[36]

According to the first panel, Ezekiel's interest is not in creating 'a single piece of wood' (עֵץ אֶחָד), from two pieces (עֵצִים), but 'a single nation' (גּוֹי אֶחָד), from two nations (גּוֹיִם שְׁנֵי, v. 22a). The preference for the term גּוֹי over עַם ('people') is deliberate. The latter, a warm relational term, with undertones of kinship, would have been appropriate in another context, but here the concern is the restoration of Israel as a nation, which requires the use of גּוֹי.[37] Given prevailing ancient Near Eastern perceptions, by affirming Israel's ethnic, territorial, political, and spiritual integrity Ezekiel paints a remarkably comprehensive picture of a mature nation.

Ezekiel stresses the restoration of Israel's political integrity by announcing the reversal of 931 BC, when a single people had *de facto* become two nations. For the moment omitting any reference to David, the factual statement of v. 22b was called for by the previous notice that Israel would be constituted a single nation (גּוֹי אֶחָד). The emphasis is on the singularity of the monarchy: a single king will rule over all the tribes; never again would there be two nations (גּוֹיִם), which is to say two kingdoms (מַמְלָכוֹת). If the emphasis on a single ruler symbolizes the nation's new unity, the present preference for מֶלֶךְ over נָשִׂיא highlights the restoration of Israel to full nationhood.[38] The use of the latter expression here would have suggested less than complete restoration. For the moment Ezekiel offers no hints of the king's identity. His concern is principle: a nation (גּוֹי) is by definition a mon-

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[35]For summaries see J. Lust, 'Ezekiel 36-40 in the Oldest Greek Manuscript', *CBQ* 43 (1981) 526-27; K. Friebel, 'Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's Sign-Acts: Their Meaning and Function as Nonverbal Communication and Rhetoric' (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1989) 848-49.
[36]In MT the first panel consists of 72 words; the second 68.
[37]See D.I. Block, *ISBE* (rev. ed.) III, 492, 759-60. For a fuller study of these terms see *idem, The Foundations of National Identity: A Study in Ancient Northwest Semitic Perceptions* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1983) 12-127.

archy (מַמְלָכָה), which must be ruled by a king (מֶלֶךְ).[39]

In v. 23 the promise of spiritual rejuvenation is expressed in terms of a healthy relationship between Israel and her patron deity. Arguing from effect to cause, the prophet begins by announcing the symptoms of the new spiritual reality: the nation will be rid of the defilement resulting from the people's idolatry, disgusting practices and acts of rebellion. Echoing 36:25-28, the process of purification involves the divine rescue of the Israelites from their 'apostasies', their purification, and the renewal of the covenant, expressed by citing the covenant formula, 'They shall be my people and I will be their God.' The expansion of the covenant formula in v. 24a concretizes the spiritual renewal by announcing his appointment of David as 'king' in Israel.[40] By identifying the king by name Yahweh not only affirms the eternality of his original promise to David (2 Sa. 7:16); he also discredits past rulers who have wrongly claimed the title, 'king of Israel', particularly the Josephite/Ephraimite rulers of the northern kingdom. As in 34:23-24, the king's special relationship with Yahweh is reflected in the designation, עַבְדִּי ('my servant'). Whereas all the northern kings and many of their Judaean counterparts, especially

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[38]In the face of Ezekiel's decided preference for נָשִׂיא ('chieftain, prince'), scholars have long stumbled over the present choice of מֶלֶךְ, and many emend the text here and in v. 24 accordingly, with support from LXX which reads ἄρχων. On the Septuagintal reading see J. Lust, 'Exegesis and Theology in the Septuagint of Ezekiel: The Longer Pluses and Ezek 43:1-9' in C.E. Cox (ed.), *VI Congress of the International Organisation for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Jerusalem 1986* (Septuagint and Cognate Studies 23; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987) 217-21; Rofé, *Textus* 14 (1988) 171-73. *Cf.* J. Boehmer, '*mlk* und *nśy* bei Ezechiel', *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 79 (1900) 112-17; E. Hammershaimb, 'Ezekiel's View of the Monarchy', *Aspects of Old Testament Prophecy*, 51-63; K.-D. Schunck, 'Die Attribute des eschatalogischen Messias', *TLZ* 111 (1986) 651, n. 23. מֶלֶךְ occurs thirty-seven times in the book, twenty-five of which refer to foreign kings: *e.g.*, the kings of Babylon (17:12; 19:9; 21:23-25; 26:7), Egypt (29:2-3), Tyre (28:12), Edom (32:29), the earth (28:17), the coastlands (27:35). Outside of this context, מֶלֶךְ occurs in 1:2 (of Jehoiachin); 7:27 (unnamed and parallel to נָשִׂיא); 17:12 (of Jehoiachin, removed by the king of Babylon; 43:7, 9 (3 times, of Israel's past paganised kings). While Ezekiel's hesitancy to designate Israelite kings as מְלָכִים may reflect a basic anti-monarchic stance, the emendation proposed for this text overlooks the fact that מֶלֶךְ provides a better contextual correlative for גּוֹי, especially in the face of the following association of מַמְלָכוֹת and גּוֹיִם. Furthermore, LXX renderings of מֶלֶךְ vary. Only 1:2 and 17:12 translate βασιλεύς; 7:27 drops the reference; 43:7a, 7b, 9 read ἡγούμενος; the present context (37:22a, 22b, 24) reads ἄρχων.

[39]*Cf.* Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel*, 24-25.

[40]The addition seems awkward, but the occurrence of a similar phenomenon in 34:23 cautions against its deletion.

Ezekiel's contemporaries, had been driven by self-service, this new ruler will embody the ideals established in Deuteronomy 17:14-20, submitting to the overlordship of Yahweh. As shepherd-king, he will function as the agent of Yahweh's reign and the symbol of the nation's unity, exercising watch-care after the divine model set out in ch. 34.

No formal break separates the two panels of this oracle, but as already observed, the theme shifts dramatically from the unification of the nation to the permanence of the restored deity-nation-land relationships. This is highlighted by the five-fold occurrence of עוֹלָם, which, as E. Jenni has argued, denotes fundamentally 'the remotest time',[41] either the remote past or the distant future. But along with the sense of duration, the word bears nuances of permanence, durability, inviolability, irrevocability, and immutability, and in so doing points to the definitive nature of the coming salvation.[42] The specific affirmation in v. 25 that 'David my servant shall be their prince forever (לְעוֹלָם)' addresses the previous problem of the mortality of even good kings in Israel. Unlike the original David, and his honourable successors like Hezekiah and Josiah, all of whom died, in the future the failure and the moral inconsistency of succeeding rulers will be remedied.

With his five-fold affirmation of the eternality of the restoration, Yahweh transforms this oracle into a powerful eschatological statement, envisaging an entirely new existence, where the old historical realities are considered null and void, and the new salvific work of God is perceived as final.[43] For Ezekiel eschatological events are neither ahistorical nor supra-historical; they are based upon Yahweh's past actions in history and represent a final solution to the present historical crisis. But the scope of his eschatological hope extends beyond a renewal of Yahweh's covenant with his people, incorporating all the other promises upon which the Israelites had based their security: Yahweh's covenant with David, his establishment

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[41]*THAT* II, 228-30. For a full study see *idem*, 'Das Wort *ʿôlām* im Alten Testament', *ZAW* 64 (1952) 197-248; 65 (1953) 1-35.

[42]Jenni, *THAT* II, 239.

[43]The nearest Hebrew equivalent to Greek ἔσχατος, 'last' (*cf.* G. Kittel, *TDNT* II, 697-98) is אַחֲרִית. This word combines nuances of finality and newness, as evidenced by Jeremiah's characterisation of the eschatological covenant as both 'everlasting' (בְּרִית עוֹלָם, 32:40) and 'new' (בְּרִית חֲדָשָׁה, 31:31). See further K.-D. Schunck, 'Die Eschatologie der Propheten des Alten Testaments und ihre Wandlung in exilisch-nachexilischer Zeit', in *Studies on Prophecy: A Collection of Twelve Papers* (VTS 26; Leiden: Brill, 1974) 119; G. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Row, 1965) 112-19.

of Jerusalem as the place for his name to dwell, and his special interest in the land of Canaan as his land, offered as a gracious fiefdom to Israel to administer on his behalf. In contrast to the following prophecy against Gog, which fixes the time of the battle with this northern foe in the distant future with a variety of temporal phrases,[44] no hints concerning the time of fulfilment are given. These events are deemed eschatological, therefore, not because they are expected to transpire at the end of history, but because they are new and they are final—their effects guaranteed to continue forever.

According to vv. 24b-25, Israel's renaissance will be demonstrated in a new commitment to the will of Yahweh as the divine patron, their occupation of the hereditary homeland forever, and their enjoyment of the rule of David, Yahweh's servant, forever. Shifting attention away from political reunification in the first panel, Ezekiel reverts to his preferred designation for Israel's kings, נָשִׂיא (*cf.* vv. 22, 24a), and defines his role spiritually as 'servant of Yahweh for them', rather than politically as 'king over them' (v. 24). The term נָשִׂיא alludes to the prince's ties with the people and his function as regent under Yahweh, and prepares the way for chs. 40-48, where the person with this title functions primarily as religious leader. Just as Israel's title to the hereditary homeland is based upon Yahweh's gift to 'his servant' Jacob, so the pledge of a new ruler is based upon his promise to another servant, David. The language is obviously dependent on 2 Samuel 7, where David is twice identified by Yahweh as עַבְדִּי, 'my servant' (vv. 5, 8), and where he acknowledges this role no fewer than ten times.[45] This link is strengthened by the description of the new David's tenure as 'eternal' (עוֹלָם occurs eight times in the earlier text).[46] Yahweh's covenant with the dynasty may have been suspended, but it has not been forgotten. He hereby dismisses unequivocally the conditionality of past occupancy of the throne.[47] What happened to Zedekiah in 586 BC will never happen again. In vv. 26-27 the attention returns to Yahweh, who, as the source of Israel's renewal, promises to make a [re]new[ed] covenant with Israel.

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[44]'Many days hence' (מִיָּמִים רַבִּים, 38:8), 'on that day' (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, 38:10, 14, 18, 19; 39:11), 'in the future years', (הַשָּׁנִים, 38:8), 'in the future days' (בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים, 38:16), 'the day when I manifest my glory' (יוֹם הִכָּבְדִי, 39:13), 'from that day onward' (מִן הַיּוֹם הַהוּא, 39:22).

[45]2 Sa. 7:19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27 [twice], 28, 29 [twice].

[46]2 Sa. 7:13, 16 [twice], 24, 25, 26 (all עַד עוֹלָם); 29 [twice] (לְעוֹלָם) David expresses his consciousness of the eternality of this covenant in his charge to his subjects and to his son Solomon in 1 Ch. 28:4, 7, 8, 9.

Taken as a whole, this oracle reinforces Ezekiel's exalted view of Yahweh—he is faithful to his ancient and modern prophetic word and promises his eternal covenant of peace out of concern for his reputation—as well as his realistic view of God's people. Against the grain of centuries of history and deep-seated prejudices, Yahweh extends his grace to the whole house of Israel—not only Judah, but Joseph and his confederates as well. He rescues them not only from sin, but from their divisive past. By renewing the eternal covenant and establishing his residence in the midst of the nation, all tribes enjoy equal access to the divine patron, and participate in the benefactions that emanate from him.

This oracle also reinforces Ezekiel's complex view of the Messiah. In spite of the prophet's avoidance of specifically messianic designations,[48] the messianic significance of this oracle is obvious. The principal features of Ezekiel's Messiah are reflected in the titles and role designations he bears. As David he is heir to the eternal dynastic promises made by Yahweh to Israel's greatest king through the prophet Samuel.[49] As עַבְדִּי ('my servant') he enjoys a special relationship with Yahweh. Not only is the Messiah's role primarily religious; he derives his authority by divine appointment rather than personal acumen or democratic election. As נָשִׂיא ('prince, chieftain') he stands at the head of his people, not as a tyrannical ruler, but as one who has been called from their ranks to represent them. As מֶלֶךְ ('king') he symbolizes the nation's new unity. All other pretenders to the throne have been dismissed that Israel may be 'one nation' under 'one king' occupying the land of Israel. As רֹעֶה אֶחָד ('one shepherd'), a fifth title added in v. 24 to remind his audience of the new dynastic disposition, he will seek the welfare of the flock, protecting and nurturing them after the pattern of Yahweh himself (ch. 34), and in fulfilment of the ancient Mosaic charter for kingship.[50] In all these

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[47]D. Bloesch's description of the new covenant (Je. 31:31-34; Ezk. 34:25) ('"All Israel Will Be saved": Supersessionism and the Biblical Witness', *Interpretation* 43 [1989] 132) apply to the Davidic as well: 'It is unconditional in that it proceeds out of the free grace and mercy of God, but its efficacy is contingent on faith and obedience.' While David recognized an element of contingency in his charge to Solomon (1 Ki. 2:4; *cf.* also Ps. 132:12 [Heb. v. 13] and 1 Ch. 28:9), Yahweh's threat of discipline in 2 Sa. 7 does not suggest cancellation of title to the throne. Ps. 89: 3-4, 28-37 [4-5, 29-38] speaks specifically of an eternal and irretractable covenant.

[48]So also the Targum, on which see S.H. Levey, *The Targum of Ezekiel* (The Aramaic Bible 13; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1987) 4-5; *idem*, *The Messiah*, 83-87.

[49]2 Sa. 7. In this regard Ezekiel follows long-standing prophetic tradition: Am. 9:11; Ho. 3:5; Is. 9:1-7 [8:23-9:6]; 11:1-5; Mi. 5:1-4 [4:14-5:5]; Je. 23:5-6.

roles, Ezekiel's Messiah symbolizes the realities of the new age. Remarkably, he plays no part in the restoration of the nation. He neither gathers the people nor leads them back to their homeland. Unlike other prophets, Ezekiel makes no mention of the Messiah as an agent of peace[51] or righteousness,[52] these being attributed to the direct activity of God. The Messiah's personal presence symbolizes the reign of Yahweh in the glorious new age.[53]

IV. The נָשִׂיא in Ezekiel 40-48

The נָשִׂיא in Ezekiel's concluding vision is an enigmatic figure. On the one hand, the title links him with the person described in 34:24 and 37:25. But the portrait of this person is less than ideal, and in the narrative of the vision the prophet provides no clear hints of a Davidic connection, the basis of all messianic hopes. The privileges and responsibilities of the נָשִׂיא in Ezekiel's new order are described in a series of scattered fragments: 44:3; 45:7-8 and its echo in 48:21; 45:21-46:12.[54] Based on these texts the following observations concerning the role and function of the נָשִׂיא may be made:

(1) Although the outer eastern gateway is forever closed to human traffic, the נָשִׂיא alone may sit in the gateway and eat his sacrificial meals there (44:1-3).[55]

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[50]Dt. 17:14-20.

[51]Is. 9:6-7 [5-6]; 11:6-9; Mi. 5:5; Je. 23:6; Zc. 9:9-10.

[52]Is. 9:6-7 [5-6]; 11:2-5; Je. 23:5-6. On the relationship of Ezekiel's Messiah to other biblical portraits see A. Moenikas, 'Messianismus im Alten Testament (vorapokalyptische Zeit)', *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 40 (1988) 289-306.

[53]For a critique of Laato's forced thesis that the model of kingship of Ezekiel's new David derives from the royal ideology prevailing in Josiah's time (*Josiah and David Redivivus*, 177-89), see J. Becker's review in *Biblica* 75 (1994) 250-55.

[54]Many follow H. Gese, *Der Verfassungsentwurf des Ezechiel [Kap. 40-48] traditionsgeschichtlich untersucht* (Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 25; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1957), esp. pp. 108-23, in isolating 44:1-3, 45:21-25, and 46:1-10, 12 as a discreet נָשִׂיא stratum. Laato (*Josiah and David Redivivus*, 189-96) offers a recent modification of Gese's theory. For a convincing critique of this approach see Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel*, 27-31. The abruptness of the notice and the fact that 44:3b is largely repeated in 46:8 have raised questions concerning the authenticity of this verse. For discussion see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 439. However, the present passing reference to the נָשִׂיא, to be followed by a later fuller treatment, represents another example of the 'resumptive exposition' that characterizes the book and may well have characterized Ezekiel's rhetorical style.

[55]לֶחֶם, literally 'bread', but here used in a broader cultic sense.

(2) The נָשִׂיא is assigned a special territorial grant, separate from the tribal allotments, consisting of two large tracts of land on either side, east and west, of the sacred reserve (45:7-9; 48:21).

(3) The נָשִׂיא must provide the prescribed animals, grain and oil for the purification, whole burnt, and grain offerings, which are to be offered on his and the people's behalf (45:21-25).

(4) On weekly sabbaths and new moon celebrations the נָשִׂיא shall enter the eastern gateway of the inner court through the vestibule, stand by the post of the gate,[56] that is the jamb between the vestibule and the series of guard recesses,[57] to observe the priests presenting the offerings on his behalf. Forbidden to step out onto the most sacred space of the inner court, he must prostrate himself on the threshold of the gate (46:1-7, 12).

(5) At the appointed festivals the נָשִׂיא must enter the sacred precinct with the rest of the lay worshippers, who are permitted to enter the outer court through either the northern or the southern gate. However, unlike the נָשִׂיא, the common folk may not turn around inside the precinct and exit via the gate through which they entered (46:8-10).

(6) The נָשִׂיא may present additional voluntary offerings to Yahweh, but they must be presented in the same way as the sabbath and new moon offerings, with him observing from the inner east gate. After the offerings are completed he must leave this gate and it shall be shut behind him (46:12).

(7) The נָשִׂיא may present portions of his property to his sons as their permanent possessions, but should he wish to award any of his land to his servants, in the year of liberation (שְׁנַת הַדְּרוֹר) it must return to the prince (46:17).[58]

(8) The נָשִׂיא is barred from confiscating property of the people and giving it to his sons as their own territorial grants (46:18).

What is to be made of all these regulations? Recently some have read the Ezekielian Torah as a fundamentally anti-monarchic polemic.[59] Whereas under the old order kings had built temples,

[56] The architectural vocabulary changes from ch. 40, מְזוּזָה, 'doorpost', replacing אַיִל, though מְזוּזָה had been used of the doorposts of the Temple (41:21; 43:8; 45:10) and the inner gate (מְזוּזַת שַׁעַר, 45:10).

[57] See 40:28-37.

[58] Whereas his contemporary, Jeremiah, applied the term דְּרוֹר to the 'release' of persons (Je. 34:8, 15, 17), in the present ordinance Ezekiel modifies a Mosaic custom of 'proclaiming release' (קָרָא דְּרוֹר) every fiftieth year at which time all enslaved Israelites were to return to their patrimonial holdings (אֲחֻזָּה).

appointed cult officials, assigned ritual duties, offered sacrifices, and encroached upon sacred space with their private buildings (43:7-8), this ordinance assigns the civil ruler a third rank, two or three rungs below deity: Zadokite priests have access to Yahweh, and the Levitical priests may serve within the courts, but the נָשִׂיא is repulsed. He must eat his meals at the gate.[60] Furthermore, in this vision the Temple is deliberately separated from the royal palace complex (43:8; 48:19). The capital 'City' is not the king's private preserve but belongs to the entire house of Israel, and severe restrictions are placed on the prince's management of land.

But do these details reflect a basically anti-monarchic stance in Ezekiel's final vision? We think not. One must distinguish between the monarchy in principle and the conduct of Israel's monarchs in history. In the light of the general ancient Near Eastern association of mature nationhood with kingship structures,[61] and also in view of specific traditional monarchic expectations[62] and the eternality of the Davidic covenant (2 Sa. 7), it is inconceivable that Ezekiel would have opposed the monarchy *per se*. On the contrary, as we have seen, in 37:16-28 (*cf.* 34:23-25) he combines ancient tribal and Davidic covenantal traditions to promise specifically the return of David as king over all the tribes of Israel.[63] Furthermore, reconfiguring power structures is no guarantee that the abuses of the past will be resolved. Ezekiel's final vision does not eliminate hierarchical institutions; it redefines how existing structures will work in his new order.

Past scholars have correctly recognized the special status of the נָשִׂיא in Ezekiel's final vision.[64] He is clearly an exalted figure, far

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[59]J.Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) 61-62; D.L. Stevenson, *The Vision of Transformation: The Territorial Rhetoric of Ezekiel 40-48* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1993) 139-43.

[60]Interpreting נָשִׂיא as equivalent to פחה, 'governor', S.S. Tuell, *The Law of the Temple in Ezekiel 40-48* (HSM 49; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) 119 interprets נָשִׂיא as 'a title descriptive of the cultic task of the *nśy*'. He continues: 'For the post-exilic priestly establishment this was of paramount concern, and reminiscent of Israel's ancient and honourable past, yet lacking dynastic or imperial overtones'; hence, he argues, it was not offensive to the Persian overlords.

[61]Reflected in 1 Sa. 8:5, 19. On this subject see Block, *Foundations of National Identity*, 493-585.

[62]Note the expectation of kings in the patriarchal promise (Gn. 17:6, 16; 35:11); the association of the sceptre with Judah (Gn. 49:10); the Balaam oracles (Nu. 24:7, 17); the Deuteronomic 'charter for kingship' (Dt. 17:14-20).

[63]This fact may be denied only by excising the term מֶלֶךְ from the text. See the note above.

more important than the 'princes' of the premonarchic period. But does this mean Ezekiel identifies this נָשִׂיא with the messianic figure described in 34:23-25 and 37:22-25? Though some would argue that denying this link drives a wedge between the נָשִׂיא in chs. 40-48 and the נָשִׂיא in earlier chapters,[65] the view that the presentation of this figure in the latter chapters is in continuity with earlier references must answer several important objections.

First, Israelite messianic expectations were by definition monarchic in character, and immutably based upon Yahweh's dynastic covenant with David. Why then are chs. 40-48 silent on the Davidic connection? They seem indeed to portray the נָשִׂיא as an honourable figure, but without apparent political power.

Second, Israelite messianism insisted on a close link between the Messiah and Jerusalem/Zion. Why then does Jerusalem seem to be out of the picture in Ezekiel's final vision? The prince and his land are deliberately separated from the city bearing the name 'Yahweh is there' (48:35) and the Temple, Yahweh's true residence.

Third, Israelite messianism perceives the Messiah as sovereign over the entire universe. Why then does this vision not only tie him down to the land of Israel? It also places severe restrictions on the rights of the נָשִׂיא. Yahweh may authorize him, even invite him to eat before him in this gate, but as a mortal he must enter by another way. Only Yahweh may enter through the eastern gate.

Fourth, and perhaps most seriously, elsewhere (including Ezekiel's own statements in 34:23-24 and 37:21-25) Israel's Messiah is always portrayed in glorious idealistic terms. Why is the portrait of the נָשִׂיא in the Ezekielian Torah so shockingly realistic? Not only must offerings be presented on his behalf; specific ordinances warn him not to exploit and abuse his subjects like Israel's kings had done in the past (46:18).

These objections, however, may be answered from several directions. First, although one might expect a consistent use of a techn-

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[64]J. Wright, 'A Tale of Three Cities: Urban Gates, Squares, and Power in Iron Age II, Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Israel' (paper presented to the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, New Orleans, 1990) 17, comments: 'The east gate legitimates the prince's power, equating him with the divine presence within the society.'

[65]Levenson, *Theology*, 75-101. Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus*, 196, recognises the Temple mountain, the restoration of the Temple, and the important role of the Messiah in this restoration, as links between the pro-נָשִׂיא traditions of chs. 40-48 and chs. 34 and 37.

ical term like נָשִׂיא throughout the book, Ezekiel has a habit of using the same expressions with different nuances.

Second, a dramatic shift in genre is evident between the earlier restoration oracles[66] and the idealistic final vision. Whereas the former are closely tied to history, anticipating a wholesale reversal of the events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC, the latter is contrived, idealized, symbolic, and many of its features are unimaginable.[67] Contrary to common popular opinion, the description of the Temple is not presented as a blueprint for some future building to be constructed with human hands.[68] This vision picks up the theme of divine presence announced in 37:26-27 and describes the spiritual reality in concrete terms, employing the familiar cultural idioms of Temple, altar, sacrifices, נָשִׂיא, and land. In presenting this theological constitution for the new Israel, Yahweh announces the righting of all old wrongs and the establishment of permanent healthy deity-nation-land relationships. Ezekiel's final vision presents a lofty ideal: Where God is, there is Zion. Where God is, there is also order and the fulfilment of all his promises.

Third, the primary concern in this vision is not political, but cultic. The issue is not the return of David, but the presence of Yahweh. Accordingly, the role of the נָשִׂיא is facilitative, not regally symbolic. Unlike past kings, who perverted the worship of Yahweh for selfish ends and/or sponsored the worship of other gods, this נָשִׂיא is charged with promoting the worship of Yahweh in spirit and in truth. Uniquely in this vision, with its radically theocentric portrayal of Israel's future, the נָשִׂיא emerges as a religious functionary, serving the holy community of faith, which itself is focused on the worship of the God who dwells in their midst. Where the presence of God is recognized, there is purity and holiness. Ezekiel's נָשִׂיא is not responsible for the administration of the cult. Not only does he not participate actively in the ritual; he does not build the temple, design the worship, or appoint the priests; these prerogatives belong to Yahweh. This agrees with the image of the נָשִׂיא in 34:23-24, who is installed as under-shepherd by Yahweh only after the latter has personally rescued Israel.[69] In this ideological presentation the נָשִׂיא functions as Yahweh's appointed lay

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[66]Ch. 34 is a genuine salvation oracle; 37:15-28 an interpreted sign-act.
[67]A subject dealt with in my paper 'Envisioning the Good News: Hermeneutical Keys to Ezekiel's Final Vision', read to the Evangelical Theological Society in Chicago, November 18, 1994.
[68]A point convincingly argued by Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, 14-21.
[69]*Cf.* Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel*, 50-55.

patron and sponsor of the cult, whose activity ensures the continuance of harmonious relations between deity and subjects. The God of Israel has fulfilled his covenant promises, regathering the people and restoring them to their/his land. More important, he has recalled the people to himself, and established his residence in their midst. Now let them celebrate, and let the נָשִׂיא lead the way!

CHAPTER 9

MODELS OF PROPHETIC PREDICTION AND MATTHEW'S QUOTATION OF MICAH 5:2[1]

Philip P. Jenson

Summary

The New Testament use of Old Testament quotations is sometimes thought to ignore the original intention and context of the text. This essay argues that over-rigid ideas of prophecy may underlie this perception and explores seven metaphors for prophecy: prophecy understood as a stone, a line of sight, a code, a stream, a plant, a bird and a musical composition. The last two are most adequate in doing justice to the openness and personal character of prophecy, and in holding together categories of promise-fulfilment and typology. The interpretative tradition displays both continuity and creative adaptation, as is illustrated by a study of the quotation of Micah 5:2 [Heb. v. 1] in Matthew 2:6.

[1]This essay is a revised version of a paper read on 6th July 1994 before the Old Testament Study Group of the Tyndale Fellowship in Swanwick, Derbyshire.

I. Models of Prophecy

The New Testament fulfilment of Old Testament messianic prophecies has been the subject of extensive discussion from very different points of view. Believers see a divine hand in remarkable correspondences, sceptics detect a more human untidiness and imperfection. Old Testament specialists attempt to make sense of the phenomenon from back to front, New Testament scholars from front to back. Biblical theologians apply the categories of typology and promise-fulfilment, students of hermeneutics invoke the conventions of ancient Jewish exegesis. The messianic prophecies cited in the New Testament offer a particularly challenging testing ground for all wishing to consider the relation between the two testaments.

For some, the idea of the long-term fulfilment of prophecy no longer makes sense. Robert Carroll highlights the challenge of prophecies that 'failed', and suggests that much of the prophetic tradition is concerned to respond to the failure of prophecy.[2] Failed prophecies led to cognitive dissonance, a clash between theory and reality, and this encouraged radical reinterpretation of the original prophecies. Believers resolve a lack of fit between prediction and fulfilment by seeking to remove or reduce the dissonance. This might happen by avoiding the causes of dissonance, explaining or rationalizing the dissonance, or resorting to a group which shares the same opinion and forms a dissonance-free environment.

Another challenge to considering both Testaments together is the suggestion that there have been such cultural shifts along the way from Old to New Testaments that questions of continuity are inappropriate. John Barton argues that post-exilic Judaism developed a mode of understanding of prophecy that was different from both earlier and modern approaches. It read the texts as predicting the distant future, which 'thus entirely reverses the way in which modern scholarship has taught us (rightly, I am sure) to think about the essence of prophecy in earlier times.'[3] The exegetical technique of an interpreter such as Matthew may be understood in the first century hermeneutical context, but it cannot be taken seriously as an authentic interpretation of the Old Testament today.[4] We may simply need to

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[2]R.P. Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed: Reactions and Responses to Failure in the Old Testament Prophetic Traditions* (London: SCM, 1979). See the summary statement on p. 216.

[3]J. Barton, *Oracles of God: Perceptions of Ancient Prophecy in Israel after the Exile* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986) 197.

admit that much of the New Testament use of the Old reflects first-century methods of exegesis which we cannot and should not follow.[5]

Zimmerli explored yet another approach to the question of how the New Testament related to the Old. He reinterpreted 'fulfilment' in such a way that the history of the Old Testament as a whole manifested a forward-looking principle that led naturally to fulfilment in the New Testament:[6]

> the question concerning further fulfilment always involves the more pressing question of the still further, the ultimate will of Yahweh... But because this is so, every Old Testament event receives increasingly the character of a fulfilment which in turn presses the question of deeper fulfilment.

This may well be true, but it still leaves the challenges raised by specific texts, which Zimmerli did not discuss in his essay.

Both Carroll and Barton stress the discontinuity between Old and New Testament attitudes to prophecy, and contrast it also to our modern historical-critical approach to the Bible. However, the sharp distinctions made between people of different eras is reminiscent of the debate amongst anthropologists about the relation between the modern and 'the savage mind'.[7] One of the lessons of this debate appears to be that it is unwise to short-circuit a careful, sympathetic

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[4]'The New Testament proceeds by means of an exegetical method common in late Judaism, which undertakes a concrete application to the present situation without regard for the original statement and its concomitant historical consciousness' (J. Becker, *Messianic Expectation in the Old Testament* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1980] 94); 'a use of the Hebrew Scriptures by the New Testament at which most readers today will feel discomfort and dissatisfaction because it seems to ignore the original meaning of the words and takes them out of their context' (C.F.D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* [Cambridge: CUP, 1977] 127); 'any similar development of Old Testament themes today would be considered by most Christians to be quite shocking' (R.N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975] 141).

[5]'What then can be said to our question, "Can we reproduce the exegesis of the New Testament?" I suggest that we must answer both "No" and "Yes." Where that exegesis is based upon a revelatory stance, where it evidences itself to be merely cultural, or where it shows itself to be circumstantial or *ad hominem* in nature, "No." Where, however, it treats the Old Testament in more literal fashion, following the course of what we speak of today as historico-grammatical exegesis, "Yes."' (Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis*, 219).

[6]W. Zimmerli, 'Promise and Fulfilment' in C. Westermann (ed.), *Essays on Old Testament Interpretation* (London: SCM, 1963) 89-122, esp. 112. See the critical comments by J. Barr, *Old and New in Interpretation: A Study of the Two Testaments* (2nd ed; London: SCM, 1982) 122-24.

and comprehensive study of 'primitive' texts. Different modes of thought are often more on a spectrum than on opposite sides of a chasm. Are there perspectives that could enable us to see the messianic exegesis of the New Testament as more rational than Carroll and Barton seem to allow?

In exploring this suggestion I would like to analyse some of the metaphors that have been used to understand the relation between messianic prophecies in the Old and New Testaments. Whenever we come across an experience or phenomenon we find difficult to understand, it is natural and inevitable that we draw upon more familiar experiences. The discussion of messianic prophecy is no exception. There is no harm in this, and indeed good metaphors can lead us into new truth, or the old truth newly perceived. However, metaphors also need to be assessed for adequacy, and the inappropriate development of a metaphor can lead astray.[8] Seven metaphors that may be found in the literature compare prophetic prediction to stones, lines of sight, codes, streams, plants, birds and musical compositions. The choice of just seven is somewhat arbitrary, and different scholars work out the details of the metaphors in different ways. But the discussion may clarify some of the relevant issues.

1. Prophecy as a Stone

One modern synonym for prophecy is forecasting, a term that suggests a prophet throws a scenario of what will happen into the future. In time we discover whether the words have come to pass or not. More vividly, we might imagine a prophetic prediction to be a stone catapulted through the air towards a certain point in the distance. The prophet is the sender, time is the linear medium through which the stone travels, and hitting the target is the fulfilment of the predicted event. All these aspects of the metaphor are familiar to us in our everyday language and are also reflected in the Bible. We regard our words as objects distinct from us with an independent existence (*cf.* Is.

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[7]See C. Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1966). Various aspects of the debate are explored in R. Horton and R. Finnegan (eds.), *Modes of Thought: Essays on Thinking in Western and Non-Western Societies* (London: Faber & Faber, 1973); M. Hollis and S. Lukes (eds.), *Rationality and Relativism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982).

[8]The approach to metaphor that I assume in the following is based on G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); G. Lakoff and M. Turner, *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

55:10-11), we see ourselves moving through time (*cf.* Ps. 23:6), and we understand that our words can have an impact when they strike home (*cf.* Je. 23:29).

A number of examples of OT prophecy can be characterized quite well by this model. The classic case is the prophecy of Micaiah in 1 Kings 22, where the prophet's genuineness depends on whether his predictions about the forthcoming battle will come true. Accurate fulfilment of a prediction is considered a valuable measure of authentic prophecy, particularly in the Deuteronomistic literature (*e.g.*, 1 Ki. 13; Dt. 18:22; Je. 28:9; *cf.* Dn. 9:2).[9]

This model is a simple one, so that it is not surprising it is probably the dominant one in popular religious circles. More surprising is the extent it seems to have influenced critical scholarship, though through denial rather than adoption.[10] The only difference is that the popular view will be that the stone was accurately cast, while sceptics will argue that the catapult was a short-range affair not intended to throw as far as the NT.

2. *Prophecy as Sight*

Foreseeing is another synonym of prophecy and recalls the importance of prophetic visions and insight (*e.g.*, 1 Ki. 22:17; Is. 30:10; Je. 1:11-3; 4:22-26; Ezk. 40:4; Am. 7:1, 4, 7; 8:1). God reveals to the prophet a vision of what will come to pass. The metaphor can be developed in various ways, for example in the distinction between the shadow and the three-dimensional reality (*cf.* Col. 2:17; Heb. 10:1).[11] Brown draws a contrast between a silhouette and a portrait:[12]

> Types foreshadow future "things". The type and the antitype are on two different levels of time, and only when the antitype appears does the typical sense become apparent. The type is always imperfect; it is a silhouette, not a portrait, of the antitype; and therefore realization is bound to bring surprises. Good typology does not stress the

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[9]The limitations of such predictive criteria are indicated by Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed*, 185-88.

[10]B.F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1979) 247.

[11]The contrast between two and three dimensions is also found in Hebrews 8:5, the architectural contrast between the blueprint or sketch and the real building (*cf.* Ex. 25:40). In Hebrews this needs to be understood eschatologically rather than in terms of a two-level vertical heaven-earth scheme (Heb. 9:24-28).

[12]R.E. Brown and S.M. Schneiders, 'Hermeneutics' in R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmeyer, and R.E. Murphy (eds.), *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1990) 1146-65, esp. 1156-57.

> continuity between the Testaments at the price of obliterating important aspects of discontinuity. This foreshadowing is related to God's plan of salvation.

Using this analogy he is able to incorporate both an element of discontinuity and an element of heightening in the move from Old to New Testament.

Another variant on the sense of sight is the portrayal of the prophet as someone peering through a telescope into the future. He sees a blurred picture which will only come into focus on closer acquaintance (*i.e.*, in the future).[13] He might see a blurred mountain peak that appear unitary, but on closer acquaintance turns out to be two or more peaks separated by a significant distance. Or:[14]

> an observer... scans the distant horizon of two mountain peaks and comes to the preliminary conclusion that the two peaks must be side by side with little or no space between them since they appear to butt up against one another. Upon closer inspection, however, the mountains may prove to be ten to twenty miles apart. In the area of prophecy the same phenomenon occurs.

Thus the Old Testament looks forward towards a day when Israel will be restored and nations judged. But the New Testament makes this comprehensive eschatological portrait into a two-stage programme, a day of invitation before a day of vengeance (compare Lk. 4:19 and Is. 61:2). Rowley writes:[15]

> To the Church, which stands between the Advent and the Second Advent, there is a long time process between the one and the other, but to prophets who saw the future afar off the depth in time was lost, as depth in space is lost to the eye of one who looks at the stars, and the First Advent and the Second Advent are therefore fused in prophecy.

The analogy has the further advantage that it can recognize the two-way character of interpretation. The telescope can point in more than

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[13]A. Edersheim, *Prophecy and History in Relation to The Messiah* (The Warburton Lectures for 1880-1884; London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1885) 129: 'The reading of prophecy seems like gazing through a telescope, which is successively drawn out in such manner as to adapt the focus to the varying vision.'
[14]W.C. Kaiser, *Back Toward the Future: Hints for Interpreting Biblical Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989) 121.
[15]H.H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel* (London: SCM, 1956) 200.

one direction. From the point of view of the fulfilled prophecy, the coming of Christ can be regarded as shedding new light on dark texts of the past.[16]

Towner discusses fulfilment and failure of prophecy in the book of Daniel with the help of a film metaphor:[17]

> Let history itself be the scene spread out before the lens, and let the Book of Daniel be the camera. Suppose the filmmaker were to set up the tripod exactly in the space between v. 8 and v. 9 of chapter 7 of Daniel... History would correspond to the images on the film. This clarity of focus and accuracy of characterization would prevail because the seer had the advantage that comes to anyone who prophesies after the fact. Should the camera operator pivot the tripod in the other direction, however, and shoot forward, an uneasiness would begin to afflict the viewer. Oh, the focus would remain clear enough on the film which the camera Daniel produces, but the picture would no longer correspond to the pictures of history made through other lenses.

While the analogy is purely anachronistic, this is one attempt to add the dimension of movement and time to the metaphor.

3. *Prophecy as a Code*

Occasionally in the Bible we find prophecies that are hidden or sealed until a future time (Is. 8:16; Dn. 8:26). To later readers, obscure prophecies seemed sealed documents ready to be broken and read, or codes waiting to be cracked. Extending the metaphor, it is necessary to find the key to a code, without which the significance of the prophecy remains hidden in obscurity.

An older writer, Briggs, enthuses about this model and regards it as a deliberate technique of the prophets and 'the infinite mind':[18]

> It is the one aim of the interpreter to find the key to the symbol, and by it unlock the mystery of the representation... The clue is a secret clue, often so carefully hidden that centuries of study have not found it... The great symbols of Hebrew predictive prophecy remained riddles of comfort and warning—all the more dread and inspiring

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[16]Edersheim, *Prophecy*, 135.
[17]W.S. Towner, 'The Preacher in the Lion's Den' in J.L. Mays and P.J. Achtemeier (eds.), *Interpreting the Prophets* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 273-84, esp. 273-74.
[18]C.A. Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy: The Prediction of the Fulfillment of Redemption Through the Messiah* (New York: Scribners, 1886) 49.

> from their profound and awful mystery—until they were resolved by the events predicted. The first advent is the great resolver of all Old Testament prophecy.

Barton writes of Matthew's quotation of Hosea 11:1 using a similar metaphor, but with a very different evaluation implied:[19]

> the fact that an incident related of Jesus made it possible to take the passage as a messianic reference enabled it to be fruitful for Christians, rather than remaining as an unsolved riddle in the great lumber-room of puzzles that the prophetic books seemed to many to be... For Christians such as Matthew and the authors of the speeches in Acts, the key to the riddle had been revealed, and they exercised their virtuosity in turning it in as many unpromising keyholes as possible.

The NT writers can confidently use scripture because they know they have the key to its meaning in Jesus Christ, and this enables them to decipher all kinds of scriptures.

The theological and interpretative value of this approach is very great. It allows the divine word to be understood in the light of the contemporary situation. Others might dismiss a text as an ephemeral historical document, but those who believed in a sovereign and faithful God believed that he would not allow any of his words to fall to the ground in vain (Is. 55:10-11).

4. Prophecy as a Stream

Stones are singular, we can look in only one direction at once, and a code has one solution. The stream metaphor lays more emphasis on the ongoing tradition of prophecy, stressing the journey as well as the start and finish points. The prophecies recorded in the Bible are only the smallest selection of what was transmitted from generation to generation along the flow of history.

Becker describes the traditional understanding of messianic prophecy as follows:[20]

> The accounts of the occupation of Canaan and the period of the Judges likewise require that we postulate a subterranean stream of messianic expectation... At the end of the monarchy and the beginning of the Exile, passages in Jeremiah and Ezekiel furnish the

[19]Barton, *Oracles*, 186-87; *cf.* also the view portrayed by C.F.D. Moule 'Fulfilment-Words in the New Testament: Use and Abuse', *NTS* 14 (1967-68), 293-320, esp. 297.
[20]Becker, *Messianic Expectation*, 12.

> welcome proof that we are dealing with a continuously flowing stream of expectation, surfacing occasionally, which hastens onward to its goal of fulfilment.

The same image is developed by Zimmerli in a way that attempts to take into account the unevenness and diversity of the Old Testament perceptions of the future:[21]

> When we survey the entire Old Testament, we find ourselves involved in a great history of movement from promise towards fulfilment. It flows like a large brook—here rushing swiftly, there apparently coming to rest in a quiet backwater, and yet moving forward as a whole toward a distant goal which lies beyond itself.

A stream has a more varied journey than a stone, but it still has an overall direction and a goal.

5. *Prophecy as a Plant*

From mechanical and inanimate metaphors we turn to the living world. The story of the people of God is often portrayed in terms of a vine or a tree (*e.g.*, Ps 80:8-16; Is 5:1-7; Rom. 11:16-24), and the prophecies that accompany and comment on this story can be regarded in the same way. We search for the roots of messianic prophecy in the past, assuming that the roots may appear different from the later shoots and branches, but yet continuous in significant ways.

This model is one that has been used by Kaiser, who draws extensively on Beecher:[22]

> Most of [the psalmist's predictions] should not be regarded as disconnected predictions, but as shoots from a common stem—the common stem being the body of connected messianic promise-history.

Kaiser is aware of the problem of reading the Bible flatly. He seeks to do justice both to the unity and continuity of the words of prophecy, and to their distinctiveness and cultural locatedness. He suggests that the various prophecies are particular examples of a generic promise

[21]Zimmerli, 'Promise', 112. Compare the analogy of the many-stranded rope in G.A.F. Knight, *A Christian Theology of the Old Testament* (2nd ed; London: SCM, 1964) 287.

[22]W.C. Kaiser, *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody, 1985) 131, quoting from W.T. Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise* (New York: Crowell, 1905) 244, a work unavailable to me.

that may be traced throughout scripture. This overall promise is revealed, then fulfilled in various ways that press forward to a future climactic fulfilment in the eschaton or messianic era.[23] We may perhaps highlight the botanical overtones of the 'generic wholeness' that results. It is a model that attempts to relate an overall perspective to the details of specific texts.

6. Prophecy as a Bird

An even more flexible metaphor is the comparison of prophecy to a bird, for we sometimes refer to phrases that exercise an abiding influence on human thought and action as 'winged words'.[24] A word set down in writing has a life of its own that is not limited to the meaning intended by the author. Potent words such as are found in prophecy may be portrayed as a bird. Like a bird, a prophecy is sensitive to changes in environment. There may be continuity if the conditions remain the same, but a bird (unlike a stone or a stream) can react quickly to changes in the environment and conditions. On this model, we would not be surprised to find that the fulfilment of a prophecy depends on many factors, including the historical and cultural context, and the response it evoked.

Perhaps we may develop the metaphor yet further to see why even failed prophecies were preserved and valued. Studying the flights of a bird can contribute to a general knowledge of the character of the bird and its goals in life. In the same way the character and purposes of the God of the prophets can be illuminated even by dead ends and unsuccessful flights.[25] Further, it is always difficult to distinguish the incidental features of a text or an event from those that have abiding importance. Only when the journey is completely over can the true significance of previous flights be assessed. An interesting example may be the varied portraits of the kings in the Deuterono-

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[23]Kaiser, *Uses*, 71 has a rather complex line-of-sight diagram that seeks to do justice to all these elements.

[24]OED 'winged' 4b mentions the Homeric equivalent, ἔπεα πτερόεντα.

[25]Compare the pictorial analogy of A.T. Hanson and R.P.C. Hanson, *Reasonable Belief: A Survey of the Christian Faith* (Oxford: OUP, 1981) 82, 85: 'As the prophets declared God's will and intentions for their contemporary situation they revealed something of God's nature and character. Because they had insight into the sort of person God is, they were able to convey a picture of the ways of God. This was partial and fragmentary, as we shall be seeing; but a picture of who God is was gradually formed... It is not a question of a miraculous endorsement of predictive vision. It is rather that the prophets give us a preliminary sketch of God's character... Jesus presents us with the full, living picture.'

mistic history. From a historical point of view Israel's kings may well have been portrayed without any messianic motivation. But later these could be used to define, negatively and positively, the composite ideal of the messianic king.

7. *Prophecy as Music*

A more human metaphor is developed by Francis Young in her extended comparison between the reading of the Bible and a musical performance. Musicians and interpreters find themselves in a delicate dialogue with previous traditions:[26]

> inspired performance cannot be limited by the text or tied to tradition —it must allow for creative play, for challenge to the tradition in the light of scholarly investigation, or development of it under the impetus of new cultural contexts

The possibility of enhanced creativity and newness combined with faithfulness to the past is illustrated by the phenomenon of the cadenza:[27]

> They [modern scholars and theologians] seek to inspire a critical *mimesis*, a desire to create appropriate improvisations and play skilful new cadenzas in new situations... The inspired 'musicality' of the performer has to be fostered by bringing the old score and present experience into creative interaction.

Young rightly rejects the idea of the single authoritative performance, but avoids relativism by suggesting that the score sets limits on the variability of a performance. We may legitimately ask if a Micah or a Matthew is a skilful, creative and faithful performer in this kind of sense.

Ellis chooses another feature of a musical composition that illustrates both continuity and discontinuity:[28]

> The recapitulation element in New Testament typology is never mere repetition but is always combined with a change of key in which some

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[26]F. Young, *The Art of Performance: Towards a Theology of Holy Scripture* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1990) 63.

[27]Young, *Art of Performance*, 162. Compare the strictures against the secondary and the parasitic, and the meditation on musical and textual interpretation in G. Steiner, *Real Presences* (London/Boston: Faber, 1989) 4-21.

[28]E.E. Ellis, 'How the New Testament Uses the Old' in I.H. Marshall (ed.), *New Testament Interpretation: Essays in Principles and Methods* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1977) 199-219, esp. 212.

aspects of the type are not carried over and some are intensified.

However, it may be even better to think of prophecy as theme and variations. The same theme can be taken up by different composers, but they will stamp their own personality on the music and work within the harmonic and rhythmic horizons of their era. The prophets are composers rather than performers, jazz soloists rather than orchestral hacks. They have more freedom than the cadenza analogy suggests, and respond to their social and political context in a way that is often far more radical than a mere modulation to a related key.

8. Evaluating the Metaphors

None of these models of prophecy is completely adequate, even though they can all shed light on certain aspects of prophecy. As metaphors, they cannot exhaust the reality, and the key characteristics of biblical prophecy must guide how the models are developed and used. First, there is a distinction to be made between prophecies that are specific and immediate, and those which are more general and have a more extended or indefinite time frame. The prophecy of Micaiah is a definite, brief, and immediate prophecy of doom. The majority of the oracles of salvation tend to be more general, and their interpretation becomes correspondingly more complex. We should also recognise the important role of the collectors or editors of our prophetic books. It is likely that specific prophecies were preserved only if they had a more general significance, or were adapted so that this was the case. The stone metaphor works reasonably well for short-range prophecy, less well for longer-range ones. The stream and plant figures allow for more extended development over long periods of time. The bird and musical metaphors are particularly good in helping us become aware how a prophecy can change and adapt its character along the way, possibly quite radically.

A second point to make is that prophecy is ultimately a personal phenomenon. The prophets are above all messengers of a fully personal God, and they speak to those who can respond in a range of ways. Zimmerli makes this point forcefully:[29]

> The prophetic promise proclaims at its deepest level not a coming *something*, after the manner of the fortune-teller, but *he* who comes, as he kills, as he calls to life. The remarkable freedom in the fulfilment of

[29]W. Zimmerli, 'Prophecy and Fulfilment', 105. A similar qualification is found in most discussions.

> the prophetic word, as over against any predetermination of the coming event according to the calendar, can be understood only from this central point of view. Only from this central point can one understand the often striking change of the historical content of the message.

The danger in stones, lines of sight, streams and codes is that they are all physical phenomena. As such they cannot do justice to the unpredictable responsiveness that attends communication between free beings. After all, the metaphor underlying the prophets' self-understanding was probably that of the divine king, who had commissioned them to deliver his messages to his people. Prophecy takes into account dialogue, negotiation and revision of plans. The purpose of a specific prophecy remains valid even if the historical situation changes radically. If a promise to David is threatened by the disappearance of the dynasty, interpretation requires an additional element of creative adaptation (Mi. 5:2 [1]), but this is not the same as its falsification.

Mechanistic or magical perceptions of the world are noticeably rare in the Bible.[30] There is a delicate play between affirmations of God's sovereignty, and his responsiveness to human beings. God as well as humans can repent and change his mind, suggesting that there is always a tentative and provisional character about the relation of prophecy to the future. God's sovereignty and faithfulness may ensure that his purposes are fulfilled, but there is no guarantee that it will happen in *this* way rather than *that*, for divine and human personality brings with it a freedom of action.

However, it is worth realising how many factors encourage us to think in rather mechanical ways. Much of our thinking about the future is bound up with specific short-term predictions that are little affected by human factors. This might be the 'forecasting' of the weather or the race results.[31] Similar encouragement is offered on a more cosmological and theological level when the universe is viewed as a closed machine, or God as the divine clock-maker.[32] An interesting cultural factor may be writing itself. Predictions and fulfilments of prophecies are often presented in columnar form, as in Von Rad's famous essay on prediction-fulfilment in the books of Kings.[33] While

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[30]See the discussion by T.E. Fretheim, *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective* (OBT; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).
[31]Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed*, 112.
[32]Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed*, 30.
[33]G. von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (SBT 9; London: SCM, 1953) 78-81.

from one point of view this is very helpful, Goody in his study of the influence of writing has stressed the way in which putting lists down on paper gives phenomena a fixedness and rigidity that is not so characteristic of a culture with a living oral tradition.[34] It is one of the major ways in which the 'savage mind' differs from the civilised mind. A list radically simplifies the complex cultural and historical context within which a prophecy functions.

It is also true that historical-critical study has tended to work with somewhat stone-like ideas of text, sharply distinguishing original sources and forms from later glosses or additions. This approach probably underestimates the continuity of the biblical writings, which is related to an evolving community that is both sensitive to tradition and open to innovation. Distinguishing an author, an editor, a collector or a redactor is not an easy matter. Further, it is possible to perceive a substantial continuity within a tradition so long as the analytical categories are broad enough. Studies of the 'messianic prophecies' have traced the way in which they retain broad structural similarities at the same time as formulating the promise in a distinctive way.[35]

If we return to our metaphors, it is perhaps becoming clear that too much concentration on the one-dimensional schemas is unhelpful. Historical or literary traditions do not run in straight lines, for they manifest repetitions, circles, variations, and dead ends. It is as if various portions of the river decide to run backwards or sideways, or if the stone decided to change direction and shape along the way so that it could hit half a dozen targets at once. Indeed, this is effectively what Koch does in a discussion which attempts to adapt the stone metaphor to do more justice to the realities of the biblical prophetic tradition. He comments:[36]

> The *dabar* is an active force, which 'lives on' until it reaches the recipient and is materialized in him (Zech. 1.5f). So the *dabar* is like a remote-control weapon, whose direction can be altered without its losing impact. How else can we explain the fact that the supporters of Haggai and Zechariah retain the sayings about Zerubbabel, and do not expunge the names? According to the Hebrew understanding,

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[34]J. Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge: CUP, 1977).

[35]K.-D. Schunck, 'Die Attribute des eschatologischen Messias: Strukturlinien in der Ausprägung des alttestamentlichen Messiasbildes', *TLZ* 111 (1986), 641-52.

[36]K. Koch, *The Prophets. Volume 2. The Babylonian and Persian Periods* (London: SCM, 1982) 166. The simplistic development of this metaphor is criticized by A.C. Thiselton, 'The Supposed Power of Words in the Biblical Writings', *JTS*, n.s. 25 (1974) 283-99.

> even when proper names are used in a prophecy, this indicates no more than a trend, not an unalterable point... It is possible to talk about an 'erroneous belief' in connection with these prophecies only if the prophetic understanding of the Word is ignored.

Of all our metaphors, the one developed by Young appears to be particularly helpful. Both words and music are communicative activities that involve a complex interaction between the performed, the performer, and the audience. It incorporates the blend of new and old, the original idea and its adaptation, while the social context and the receptivity of the hearers are further significant factors.

We may relate the music analogy to the two main strategies biblical theologians use to relate the testaments: promise-fulfilment and typology.[37] Promise-fulfilment understood as chronological sequence works with a strongly linear time-line that coheres with the stone and sight metaphors. Typology, on the other hand, is the tracing of recurrent patterns and figures and is not tied so rigidly to a one-track development. Repeated patterns of flight, family resemblances between shoots of a plant, or variations on a theme do more justice to the typical features of prophecy. In practice, both time and structure are always present in prophecy and in these models. A musical composition proceeds from start to finish, and the overture is distinct from the finale. Yet along the way there may be repetition, inversion and even parody of key harmonic and melodic ideas. Both linear and repetitive models of time are best regarded as ideal types that in practice are combined to some degree or other. 'Promise-fulfilment' should probably be understood to embrace both perspectives.[38] Similarly, Goppelt combines them in his summary of the meaning of τύπος, which involves both 'history' and 'correspondence':[39]

> Its [Typology's] true root is the idea of consummation in salvation history. It expresses the certainty that the relation of God to Israel which is set under the word by God's work in history will in spite of

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[37]See the summary in D.L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible: A Study of the Theological Relationship between the Old and New Testaments* (2nd ed.; Leicester: Apollos, 1991) 179-233.

[38]See the careful study by Moule, 'Fulfilment-Words'.

[39]L. Goppelt 'τύπος, κτλ.', *TDNT* 8.246-59, esp. 259. Compare the quotation from Brown, 'Hermeneutics' (above). See S.J. Gould, *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988). The distinction between these two perspectives is encouraged by the tendency of textbooks to discuss them in separate sections.

> every setback achieve its goal universally in new and yet corresponding demonstrations of the grace of God.

The complexity of this model mirrors the nuanced qualifications and affirmations that are to be found in the synthetic statements of Israel's future hope in the Old Testament theologies. For example Vriezen writes:[40]

> The hopes of salvation in the Old Testament are very closely bound up with the history of Israel's religion. In this history representations arise which may constitute God's word of salvation to Israel for a time, but some of these may also be rejected again in the course of history... It is remarkable that the hopes of salvation show certain fundamental aspects which recur again and again, and also that these are elaborated in the most widely different external forms, political and national, naturalistic, cosmic, and spiritual.

How might these observations be worked out in relation to one particular prophecy?

II. Micah 5:2 [1]: A Messianic Prophecy?

1. Introduction

Micah 5:1 [Heb. v. 2] is quoted in Matthew 2:6 and can be regarded as a classic fulfilment of a prophetic prediction about the Messiah. Admittedly, the standard fulfilment formula that Matthew uses three times in this chapter is not found ('This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet... ', Mt. 2:15, 17, 23). However, this is because the quotation is integrated into the narrative and is quoted by the chief priests and the scribes as referring to a future event. But the implication that this prophecy is fulfilled is clear as we move on with the wise men and witness the birth of Jesus in the foretold town, Bethlehem.

A naive approach might understand this along the lines of a simple stone-like model of prediction-fulfilment. There are three basic elements: the initial prediction (the casting of the stone), the period of waiting (the flight through the air), and then the predicted event (the hit). Micah in the eight century predicts the birth of the Messiah in

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[40]T.C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958) 354-55. *cf.* G. von Rad, Old *Testament Theology*, Vol. 2 (London: SCM, 1965) 373; W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1 (London: SCM, 1961) 502.

Bethlehem. The chief priests and scribes represent the last of the generations that have patiently awaited the fulfilment of that prophecy. Finally, in the divinely ordained place, Jesus is born.

This simple picture has come in for rough handling at the hands of biblical scholars. First, it is no longer clear how 'messianic' the prophecy of Micah 5:1 [2] is, for there are several ways in which 'Messiah' or 'messianic' can be defined. The loose use to describe the general perception of the future is rightly regarded as unhelpfully vague ('eschatological' is a better term). When we do find a royal figure portrayed in various texts, it often appears to be a short-term prediction, referring to someone shortly to be born. Specifically, the term 'messiah' (מָשִׁיחַ) is never used to describe a future saviour figure in the Old Testament. Becker states uncompromisingly that 'there was not even such a thing as messianic expectation until the last two centuries B.C.'[41] The New Testament identification of authentic predictions about the life and person of Jesus the Messiah is profoundly mistaken, at least from a historical point of view.

The second basic element is the extended waiting period, which can hardly have been envisaged by the prophet. Brown writes:[42]

> this conception of prophecy as prediction of the distant future has disappeared from most serious scholarship today, and it is widely recognized the NT 'fulfilment' of the OT involved much that the OT writers did not foresee at all. The OT prophets were primarily concerned with addressing God's challenge to their own times. If they spoke about the future, it was in broad terms of what would happen if the challenge was accepted or rejected.

Third, there is the eventual fulfilment. In Matthew's portrayal the chief priests and scribes are dealing with common knowledge. It is the timing of the stone's hit that they (fortunately or unfortunately) miss, not its existence or the reality of its flight. However, modern scholars express considerable scepticism whether Jesus was indeed born in Bethlehem. Many think that the account of Jesus' birth at Bethlehem was a largely fictional narrative inspired by a need to verify Micah's prediction. Brown sums up some of the historical difficulties:[43]

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[41]Becker, *Messianic Expectation*, 93 *cf.* p. 87: 'It is on the threshold of the New Testament that we first encounter a real messianism.' The final phrase suggests that one of the challenges is the choice of appropriately broad definition of messianism.

[42]R.E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah* (2nd ed; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1993) 146.

> Matthew's account contains a number of extraordinary or miraculous public events that, were they factual, should have left some traces in Jewish records or elsewhere in the NT (the king and all Jerusalem upset over the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem; a star which moved from Jerusalem south to Bethlehem and came to rest over a house; the massacre of all the male children in Bethlehem).

These criticisms raise issues that cannot be discussed here. However, it may be worth asking whether the perception of Old Testament prophecy and its New Testament interpretation reflected in these points is too crude.

2. *Micah*

Micah 4:9-5:6 [Heb. v. 5] consists of three linked oracles that all begin with 'now' (4:9, 11; 5:1 [4:14]) and are all concerned with an assurance of salvation for Zion, which finds itself under attack. There is extreme disagreement on the dating and interpretation of this section of Micah, and there are numerous specific exegetical problems. The historical settings that have been proposed for the third oracle, 5:1 [4:14]-5:6 [5], include the Babylonian invasion of 587 BC (Wolff), the Assyrian invasion of 701 BC (Rudolph, Allen, Waltke), and the attack by Syria and Israel in 734 BC (Shaw).

The earliest dating has recently been defended by Shaw, who compares these verses to the situation reflected in Isaiah 7. It is an oracle of salvation by Micah addressed to King Ahaz and the inhabitants of Jerusalem when beset by Rezin and Pekah (Is. 7:1). Like Isaiah, Micah appeals to the promises of God that are associated with Zion and with the Davidic dynasty (*cf.* 2 Sa. 7). As in Isaiah, there is a contrast between the ignominious present and the glorious future presided over by a righteous king. However, the complex picture of Isaiah 7-11 is reduced in Micah to a few verses. This has the effect of highlighting the contrast between present and future, and little is said about how the transition will be made. From a historical point of view, it could be said that the prophecy failed, for while Jerusalem survived and a reasonably godly king came to the throne (Hezekiah), the peace and reputation implied by this oracle remained a dream. Even allowing for prophetic hyperbole, the vision does not match reality.

Similar points can be made if the oracle is dated to 701 BC or the exile. But in the light of the scholarly disagreement, it is worth

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[43]R.E. Brown, *Birth*, 36. He is careful not to exclude some historical basis (*cf.* pp. 574-77).

considering whether the lack of precise historical reference is deliberate, particularly since all the oracles in Micah 4-5 share similar features. Willis finds seven oracles in this section of the book, each of which has a reference to Israel's hopeless situation, followed by a section of hope.[44] Zion is first portrayed as under attack by enemies, but then there follows a section describing a restored and victorious city. While the collection of oracles of similar tone is often attributed to a redactor, a contribution to this process by Micah himself cannot be excluded. Good authors often aim deliberately for a vagueness and a metaphoric openness that will give their writings an abiding significance.[45] This was probably particularly true of oracles of salvation, which were generally more open and indeterminate than oracles of punishment. The result is that the original historical situation is put into the background, so that the central affirmations of Israel's abiding hope are seen all the more clearly. This generalizing and universalizing tendency is evident in other traditions, such as the psalms, or indeed the entire book of the twelve.[46]

This is probably why oracles can be plausibly dated in quite different eras.[47] The siege walls of 5:1[14:4] and the Assyrians of 5:5 [5:4] may refer to eighth century events, but they are also typical of threats and attacks that occurred repeatedly during Israel's physical and spiritual history. Scholars who do not attribute this section to Micah have little trouble in interpreting the details in a metaphoric or general way. For example, '"Assyria" also appears as a codename for whatever great power threatens from the North' (Ezr. 6:22; Zc. 10:10-11).[48]

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[44]J.T. Willis, 'The Structure of Micah 3-5 and the Function of Micah 5:9-14 in the Book', *ZAW* 81 (1969) 191-214; *cf. idem*, 'Micah 4:14-5:5-A Unit', *VT* 18 (1968) 529-47.

[45]A. Weiser, *Das Buch der zwölf kleinen Propheten, vol. 1: Die Propheten Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadja, Jona, Micha* (5th ed; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967) 273 writes of the 'geheimnisvolles Ton des Orakelstils'. Some see in v. 3 [Heb. v. 2] a later, exilic, reinterpretation of the oracle in response to its apparent non-fulfilment (*e.g.*, H.W. Wolff, *Micah: A Commentary* [Philadelphia: Augsburg, 1990] 135, 145). C.S. Shaw, *The Speeches of Micah: A Rhetorical-Historical Analysis* (JSOTS 145; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 128-60 argues that this is Micah's own commentary on an earlier oracle.

[46]R.E. Clements, 'Patterns in the Prophetic Canon', in G.W. Coats and B.O. Long (eds.), *Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977) 42-55.

[47]See the cautions of J.L. Mays, *Micah: A Commentary* (London, SCM, 1976) 114, D.R. Hillers, *Micah* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 63, and R. Mason, *Micah, Nahum, Obadiah* (OTG; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991) 32.

The salvation oracle has an overall structure that is reflected in these oracles, but the details also tend to show signs of a complex process of repetition and reinterpretation. In Micah 5:1[4:14] Zion is under siege and the ruler is in a position of weakness and mockery. There follows the contrast of the hope section, which begins by addressing the birthplace of Jesse, the father of David. The implication, especially when read in the light of preceding oracles (*e.g.*, 3:1-4, 9-12), is that the present dynasty is corrupt or inadequate, so there has to be a fresh start. The challenge is to do justice to the evidence that the Davidic dynasty is corrupt, yet is also the recipient of potent divine promises. The solution is to go back to the very beginning and find a new David from the royal line of Judah. When this elect figure has been born (v. 3) and comes forth, then he shall prove himself to be the righteous shepherd and king that David almost was. This king will recover the reputation and power that was hinted at in Solomon, whose peaceful rule was intended to extend to the ends of the earth (vv. 4-5; *cf.* 1 Ki. 4:25 [5:5]; Is. 9:6).

The passage thus absorbs places, people and events that we know from the account of David's rise to kingship in 1-2 Samuel. However, what is striking is the selection of significant features and their adaptation. There was no particular reason why David's origin in Bethlehem (1 Sa. 17:12) should be other than a historical accident. But Micah has retrieved this detail and made it a valuable symbolic counter to doomed Zion and its Davidic ruler. It is not taken up in other prophecies, suggesting that many would have regarded it as a symbolic flourish that had no abiding significance. No one would have been concerned if the promised king was born elsewhere.

This is perhaps sufficient to show that the more inflexible models of prophecy will find it difficult to do justice to the web of allusions and the range of interpretative possibilities found in prophecy. There are gaps between present and future, ideal and reality, that leave open how Israel's hope might be worked out in the future. The patterns and symbols are more important than the historical detail, and there is uncertainty about where the literal ends and the metaphoric begins. The prophecy has begun a flight whose end is dimly perceived. The oracles provide a map, but the scale of the map and the reality behind the symbols can only be found on arrival. In particular, the means by which the king will come and the negative situation transformed into a positive one is left undefined. To these

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[48]Mays, *Micah,* 120.

open questions Matthew provides a fascinating answer in his account of the birth of Jesus the Messiah.

3. Matthew 2:6

The interpretation of the Bible by New Testament times is often regarded as mechanical, paying scant attention to the original context.[49] But it is also possible that Matthew was more alive to the creative faithfulness that we have suggested is characteristic of Old Testament prophecy. Certainly Matthew exhibits a considerable degree of textual and interpretative freedom. For modern believers an authoritative sacred text encourages precise quotation, but for the biblical writers a freer interpretation seems to have been regarded as the route to faithful interpretation.[50] In fact, verbatim quotations can probably only indicate the idea of fulfilment of a past promise. Freedom to adapt the text is necessary to highlight the key elements of a quotation and indicate typological rather than mere chronological significance.

Matthew's use of 'fulfilment' appears to embrace both promise-fulfilment and typology. This is why he can draw on quotations that are not clear prophecies of the future. Israel's experiences turn out to be typical of the Messiah's (Ho. 11:1 in Mt. 2:15) and it is difficult indeed to find a simple prediction-fulfilment rationale for 'He will be called a Nazorean' (Mt. 2:23). Only if we work with a stone model of prophecy will we need to think that Matthew regarded these texts as predictive. Micah 5:2 [1] is more clearly predictive than these texts, but we should be open to the possibility that there are typological motives at work as well. For Matthew is probably writing in an awareness of three or four distinct settings: the original prophecy in Micah, the overt setting in the birth narrative, the concerns of Matthew's community, and perhaps beyond to the end of the age (Mt. 28:20). Matthew is not writing as an objective scholar, but as someone who wishes his contemporaries to realize 'fulfilment' in their own lives.[51] Free adaptation is probably essential for those desiring this kind of wide-ranging communication.

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[49]See the quotations in n. 4. Support for this view might come from Qumran (*e.g.*, the collections of messianic prophecies in 4QTestim; 4QFlor), or from the rabbinic rules of interpretation (H.L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1992] 17-34).

[50]T.W. Manson, 'The Argument from Prophecy', *JTS* 46 (1945), 129-36, esp. 135, quoted by R.H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel* (NTS 18; Leiden: Brill, 1967) 173.

This view gains strong support by the way that Matthew has adapted the quotation of Micah 5:1 [Heb. v. 2] in the light of a broader understanding of messiahship.[52] There are several significant differences between the original prophecy and its quotation by Matthew.

(1) Instead of 'Bethlehem of Ephrathah' (בֵּית־לֶחֶם אֶפְרָתָה; LXX Βηθλέεμ οἶκος τοῦ Εφραθα Ἰούδα) he has 'Bethlehem, in the land of Judah' (Βηθλέεμ γῆ Ἰούδα). Micah 5:2 [1] carefully ensures that the home town of David's father is identified, since Jesse is called a man of Ephraim (1 Sa. 17:12). There was another Bethlehem in Zebulun (Jos. 19:15; Judg. 12:8-10), but the eventual fame of David's birthplace makes the need for such identification unnecessary. The Matthean emphasis on Judah may underline the messianic associations of the tribe, thus linking Micah 5:2 [1] to other texts that refer to Judah's special status (*e.g.*, Gn. 49:10).

(2) In Micah the reference to Bethlehem is deprecating, 'little' (NRSV) or 'least' (NJB, NJPS) among the clans of Judah. It is such an insignificant town that it was not felt worthy of inclusion in the list of towns in Joshua. Matthew has reversed the description so that Bethlehem is now 'by no means least' (οὐδαμῶς ἐλαχίστη). This shifts the mood from surprise to certainty. This may reflect a shift in time and audience, since in Micah Bethlehem is being addressed and the reversal of fortunes is unexpected. But in Matthew the rhetorical form might mislead, so the prophecy has become a confident affirmation from a later perspective that Bethlehem has a special significance as the birthplace of the Messiah.

(3) Instead of 'clans of Judah' (בְּאַלְפֵי יְהוּדָה; LXX ἐν χιλιάσιν Ἰούδα), Matthew has 'rulers'. This translation may reflect a different pointing of the Hebrew,[53] but it is more likely that there is a deliberate shift from groups to individuals, thereby stressing the individual focus of the prophecy. Matthew is concerned with the relation of Jesus the

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[51]R.T. France, 'The Formula-Quotations of Matthew 2 and the Problem of Communication', *NTS* 27 (1981) 233-51. A pedagogic role for using scripture in this way is stressed by B. Chilton, *A Galilean Rabbi And His Bible: Jesus' Own Interpretation of Isaiah* (London: SPCK, 1984) 187-92.

[52]Chilton, *Galilean Rabbi*, 185 prefers the term 'analogical' to stress that interpretation goes beyond the exact repetition of a pattern to do justice to a present experience of God's activity.

[53] בְּאַלֻּפֵי for MT בְּאַלְפֵי. G.M. Soares Prabhu, *The Formula Quotations in the Infancy Narrative of Matthew*, (Analecta Biblica 63; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1976) considers this a pre-Matthean reading. But the free interpretation characteristic of Matthew (and other translators) suggests that it may reflect a conscious interpretative move. Gundry, *Use*, 172 argues that Matthew is his own targumist.

Messiah to rulers such as Herod, not with the historical comparison of clans of somewhat different size. However, this is also a valid comment on Micah, since the honour of a tribe is bound up with the honour of its ruler (*cf.* 2 Sa. 19:43).

(4) Whereas Micah concludes with a reference to the ancient origins of the ruler (מִקֶּדֶם מִימֵי עוֹלָם), Matthew has instead 'for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel' (NRSV). This is taken from 2 Samuel 5:2 ('It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel,' NRSV). To a statement of origins is thus added a statement of role that reinforces the Davidic overtones through a reference to the stock metaphor of the shepherd-king that was applied to David (*cf.* also 2 Sa. 7:8). In fact, allusions to this motif are found a few verses later in Micah (v. 4 [3] 'and he shall stand and feed his flock'; v. 5 [4] 'seven shepherds and eight installed as rulers'). The motifs of king and shepherd belong very closely together and the first occupation of David as shepherd meant that this title was particularly appropriate.

The adaptation of the quotation thus displays a creativity and a faithfulness that is impressive. The verse is not regarded as an apologetic joker that will merely prove the messiahship of Jesus. Rather, it is a flexible entity that can be adapted in order to draw out the significance of Micah's prophecy and link it with other texts that speak of the person and work of the promised king. Different strands of messianic expectation were united as much by typological patterns as by belonging to a future-oriented prediction-fulfilment schema.

III. Conclusion

The New Testament use of Old Testament quotations is often puzzling and foreign to the modern reader. However, a serious analysis suggests that this may be because our ideas of prophecy in terms of prediction and fulfilment are often too simplistic. Neither messianism nor messianic prophecy has a clear, defined meaning, and appropriate exposition of the developing tradition will explore lines of continuity as well as discontinuity. The prophetic tradition is more helpfully compared to the freedom of a bird in flight, or the creativity of a master musician improvising on a theme. There is an openness and provisionality to biblical prophecy that calls for the kind of creative faithfulness that may be seen in Matthew's use of the Old Testament.

[illegible]

CHAPTER 10

'LEFT IN HELL'?
PSALM 16, SHEOL AND THE HOLY ONE[1]

Philip S. Johnston

Summary

The early church understood Psalm 16:10 as David's prediction of Christ's resurrection from the dead. But most scholars interpret it as a psalmist's assertion of deliverance from the immediate prospect of death, since all eventually go to Sheol. However, in the Old Testament Sheol is predominantly the destiny of the wicked, and arguably is only associated with the righteous in contexts of divine judgment. While no alternative fate for the righteous is portrayed, the author of Psalm 16 affirms that some form of continued communion with Yahweh is eminently appropriate. This tension is only resolved in Christ's resurrection.

[1]This essay is a revised version of a paper read on 6th July 1994 before the Old Testament Study Group of the Tyndale Fellowship in Swanwick, Derbyshire.

I. Introduction

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell;
neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.

This traditional translation of Psalm 16:10 instantly reminds many Christians of the magnificent tenor aria in 'The Messiah'. The triumphant tone of Handel's music and the rephrasing of the verse in the past tense (by his librettist Charles Jennens) combine to convey an unshakeable confidence in its messianic fulfilment. It was quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:27) and partially by Paul in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:35). For the apostles, and hence for orthodox Christianity, it was written by King David and predicts the future Messiah who would not be left in Sheol but would rise again from the dead.

However, modern scholarship emphatically rejects this exegesis of the psalm. For a start, the psalmist was hardly David. Secondly, he was referring to himself, not some unknown future figure. And thirdly, he was asserting deliverance from imminent mortal danger, not proclaiming belief in life beyond death.

There are considerable differences between these two interpretations, and for many scholars the New Testament reading reflects a christological appropriation of the psalm alien to its original intent. Nevertheless, there may be a greater similarity between the Hebrew and early Christian perspectives than is often realised. I propose to look briefly at the three points mentioned in the title and to suggest one area where the apostles are closer to the original intent of the psalmist than is usually allowed.[2]

II. Psalm 16

For Gunkel, the opening plea for protection indicates that this is a Psalm of Individual Lament.[3] But for many other scholars the tone of the rest of the psalm, particularly vv. 5-11, suggests a Psalm of Confidence, possibly a derivative *Gattung*.[4] The difficulties inherent in all

[2]Some points in this paper are argued more fully, with further bibliography, in: P.S. Johnston, *The Underworld and the Dead in the Old Testament* (PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 1993).
[3]H. Gunkel, *Die Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1926) 51.
[4]*E.g.* A.A. Anderson, *Psalms 1-72* (London: Oliphants, 1972) 140; and P.C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (Waco: Word, 1983) 155.

psalm study of specifying a *Sitz im Leben* of composition and use are compounded here by the textual and exegetical difficulties of vv. 2-4. In particular, those described in v. 3 as 'holy ones' (*qĕdôšîm*) have been variously identified: traditionally (and involving least difficulty) they are human saints,[5] for many scholars they are other deities,[6] more recently for some they are the 'powerful dead' (reading the following *bāʾāreṣ* as 'in the underworld').[7] The psalmist's comment on these 'holy ones' is correspondingly interpreted as one of approval or rejection. Nevertheless, despite this uncertainty, these verses clearly contain an avowal of allegiance to Yahweh and repudiation of alternative cults.

The psalmist continues with a strong declaration of present assurance: he has a delightful inheritance (vv. 5-6) and his relationship with God is continuous and secure (vv. 7-8). He then expresses his unshakeable hope in direct address to Yahweh: 'you do/will not abandon my soul to Sheol; you do/will not give your faithful one over to the pit; you make/will make the path of life known to me, filling (me) with joy in your presence, with pleasures at your right hand endlessly (*neṣaḥ*)' (vv. 10-11). For most scholars, v. 10 indicates that the psalmist is in immediate danger of death, as the opening verse implies. However, he is confident of imminent deliverance, and looks forward to further joyful life on earth in relationship to Yahweh, enriched by this

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[5]*E.g.* LXX, Targum, Vulgate; A. Weiser, *The Psalms* (London: SCM, 1962) 174; D. Kidner, *Psalms 1-72* (London: IVP, 1973) 84; J.W. Rogerson and J.W. McKay, *Psalms 1-50* (Cambridge: CUP, 1977) 66-67 (implicitly, *contra* NEB); H.-J. Kraus, *Psalms 1-59* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988) 236.

[6]*E.g.* Gunkel, 52; H. Schmidt, *Die Psalmen* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1934) 23; E.J. Kissane, *The Book of Psalms, 1* (Dublin: Browne & Nolan, 1953) 63-64; N.H. Ridderbos, *De Psalmen, 1* (Kampen:Kok 1962) 172; A. Deissler, *Die Psalmen, 1* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1963) 64-65; M. Dahood, *Psalms 1-50* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966) 87; Anderson, 142; E. Beaucamp, *Le Psautier. Ps 1-72* (Paris: Garibada, 1976) 86; Craigie, 156; H.-P. Müller, *THAT* 2: 601; H. Ringgren, *TWAT* 6: 1199.

[7]*E.g.* Zolli, 'Die "Heiligen" in Psalm 16', *TZ* 6 (1960) 149-50; C.W. Reines, 'Hosea XII, 1', *JJS* 2 (1951) 156 n. 3, 'Koheleth VII, 10', *JJS* 5 (1954) 87 n. 2; J. Coppens, *Het Ousterfelijkheidsgeloof in het Psalmboek* (Brussels: Paleis der Akadamiën, 1957) 14; J.H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms* (SBT 32, London: SCM, 1976) 163; M.H. Pope in S. Rummel (ed.), *Ras Shamra Parallels, 3* (Analecta Orientalia 51, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1981) 457; B. Lang, 'Life after death in the prophetic promise' in *Congress Volume Jerusalem 1986* (SVT 40, Leiden: Brill) 148 n. 11; K. Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (AOAT 219, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1986) 336-37; J. Tropper, *Nekromantie* (AOAT 223, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1989) 163; E. Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (JSOTS 123, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 109. See further Johnston §8.5.5.

very deliverance.

III. Sheol

One important factor in this widely accepted exegesis of Psalm 16 is the general understanding of the term *šĕʾôl* (שְׁאוֹל). This sees it as the Hebrew underworld to which all alike descend on death: rich and poor, master and slave, righteous and wicked. There, deep in the earth, in a place characterized by darkness and silence, they subsist in an enfeebled, somnolent state, cut off from Yahweh's presence and without joy or hope. Pious Israelites might wish to escape premature consignment to Sheol, but they would eventually and inescapably go there.

Several factors contribute to this view: underworld references in the Hebrew Bible, more general Hebrew references to death and burial, and death and underworld themes in other ancient Near Eastern texts. However, while the wider biblical and geographical evidence must be noted, the collective consideration of all this data obscures the distinctiveness of the Hebrew use of underworld names.[8]

By contrast, close attention to the specific use of the term *šĕʾôl* (and its clear synonyms) provides a significantly modified picture. *šĕʾôl* occurs 66 times in the Old Testament, including one likely textual emendation.[9] This is not a large figure; indeed, clear Hebrew references to the underworld total little over 100.[10] The arguments of Dahood, Tromp and others that many previously unsuspected terms allude to the underworld are largely unconvincing.[11] On the contrary, the underworld was not a major Israelite preoccupation.

Further, the pattern of use of *šĕʾôl* is most interesting. To determine this pattern, each text in which the term occurs can be categorized according to its main emphasis. (Obviously some texts

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[8] *Cf.* R. Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1960), who collates the evidence in his classic discussion.

[9] In Is. 7:11 Elliger (BHS) and others emend שְׁאָלָה ('ask') to שְׁאֹלָה ('to Sheol') following Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion (εἰς ᾅδην, 'to Hades') and LXX (εἰς βάθος, 'to the depth', *cf.* Peshitta).

[10] Also, with underworld meaning: *bôr / bĕʾēr* ('pit', 21 times), *šaḥat* ('pit', 15 times), *ʾăbaddôn* ('destruction', 6 times), and a few other terms and phrases.

[11] For instance, *ʾereṣ* (normally 'earth', 'land') is seen as an underworld term in over 50 texts. But in many this meaning is highly unlikely, in none is it demanded and therefore proven, and no ancient version testifies to it; see Johnston §2. Terms for water, depths and mire occasionally allude to the underworld, but are seldom epithets for it. Indeed, *tĕhôm* ('deep'), often cited in this respect, can be a source of blessing; see C. Westermann, *THAT* 2: 1029; Johnston §3.

have more than one emphasis, and their classification could be disputed, but this only marginally affects the results of the present analysis.)[12] *šĕʾôl* is used of the underworld in general some 25 times. This includes its portrayal as: a cosmological extremity (5 times),[13] the abode of the dead (5 times),[14] a place of confinement (4 times),[15] and a realm of shadowy existence (3 times).[16] It also includes its personification, or perhaps better its characterization, as voracious (7 times).[17] These different uses amount to less than half of all occurrences. Thus, in notable contrast to various Akkadian and Egyptian texts which reveal a vivid interest in the underworld, with its deities, its denizens and its physical conditions,[18] the Hebrew texts display little interest in the underworld *per se*. Further, the personification is minimal, consisting only of its unquenchable appetite. Barth's thesis (building on the work of Pedersen) that the underworld is an ever-threatening power which casts a long shadow over Israelite life and faith has been widely accepted in the last five decades, but it hardly does justice to the evidence.[19] Rather, the Hebrew underworld is largely depotentialized, being scarcely personified, never deified, and often simply ignored. This is all the more remarkable if, as now seems possible, the Hebrew term *šĕʾôl* derives from the name of an Emarite underworld goddess, ᵈ*Šu-wa-la*.[20]

By contrast, *šĕʾôl* is used to indicate human fate in some 41 texts, *i.e.* well over half of its occurrences. Thus the Old Testament

[12]In the list of texts for each category given below, other texts with a similar theme but classified otherwise are indicated in parentheses.
[13]Dt. 32:22; Is. 7:11; Am. 9:2; Ps. 139:8; Jb. 11:8. (*Cf.* also Is. 57:9.)
[14]1 Sa. 2:6; Is. 57:9; Jb. 17:13; 26:6; Pr. 15:11.
[15]2 Sa. 22:6 = Ps. 18:6; Ps. 116:3; Jb. 7:9; 17:16. (*Cf.* also Jb. 14:13.)
[16]Is. 14:9-11; 38:18; Ps. 6:6. (*Cf.* also Ec. 9:10.)
[17]Ho. 13:14 (twice); Hab. 2:5; Pr. 1:12; 27:20; 30:16; Ct. 8:6. (*Cf.* also Is. 5:14; Jb. 24:19.)
[18]*Cf.* standard works, *e.g.* K. Tallqvist, *Sumerisch-akkadische Namen der Totenwelt* (StOr 5/4, Helsinki: Societas Orientalis Fennica, 1934) 1 ('Die diesbezüglichen Wörter sind im Akkadischen recht zahlreich ...'); A.H. Gardiner, *The Attitudes of the Ancient Egyptians to Death and the Dead* (Cambridge: CUP, 1935).
[19]C.F. Barth, *Die Erretung vom Tode in den individuellen Klage- und Dankliedern des Alten Testamentes* (Zollikon: Evangelischer, 1947); J. Pedersen, *Israel. Its Life and Culture I-II* (London: OUP, 1920) 460-70. See further Johnston §4.
[20]D. Arnaud, *Recherches au pays d'Astata. Emar VI.3. Texte sumériens et accadiens* (Paris: Editions Recherches sur les Civilisations, 1986) 380-81, 387-89, identifies ᵈ*Šu-wa-la* in two *kissu*-festival texts from Emar as a deity called 'Sheol'. This has been accepted by some, *e.g.* J.C. de Moor, 'Lovable Death in the Ancient Near East', *UF* 22 (1990) 239; M.C.A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds* (UBL 8, Münster: Ugarit, 1990) 348; but not others, *e.g.* A. Tsukimoto, 'Emar and the Old Testament - Preliminary Remarks', *Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute* 151 (1989), 9. See Johnston §1.1.2.

writers are much more concerned with it as the destination of the living. Further, there is a striking imbalance in the use of *šᵉʾôl* for human fate. Clearly, it is a destiny from which the righteous wish to escape. Five psalmists celebrate past or future deliverance from Sheol, while two proverbs indicate that wisdom and discipline keep one safe from it.[21] At the same time, no fewer than 25 texts consign the wicked there. Psalm 9:18 is typical: 'The wicked shall depart to Sheol, all the nations that forget God.' These reprobate are often described in general terms, as wicked, or sinners, or the foolish rich, or scoffers, or immoral.[22] Some are named Israelites: Korah and company, Joab and Shimei, while others are national enemies: the king of Babylon, the Egyptians and many other foreign armies.[23] Thus *šᵉʾôl* is used predominantly as a fate suitable for the ungodly but not the godly.

Two sets of texts seem to contradict this picture. First, *šᵉʾôl* is portrayed twice as the fate of all. (a) Psalm 89:47f. [Heb. vv. 48f.] notes that life is brief and created for *šāwᵉʾ*),[24] and asks rhetorically who can avoid death and *šᵉʾôl*. This implies that everyone must go to Sheol. However, the general context of the psalm is one of divine punishment, for Yahweh apparently has rejected king, covenant and city. Further, though *šāwᵉʾ* in v. 47 is usually translated 'vanity', in the Old Testament it more often means 'deceit' or 'evil',[25] and this meaning would be appropriate here. Thus arguably in Psalm 89 it is mankind under God's judgement and created as sinful that is destined for Sheol. (b) Ecclesiastes 9:7-10 instructs the reader to enjoy his life of *hebel* ('vanity') under the sun, since afterwards he will go to Sheol where there is no work, thought, knowledge or wisdom. But Qoheleth, by most analyses, contains several unlabelled voices, whether of apologist and secularist, of author and alter ego, or of sceptical author and orthodox redactor(s), and it is difficult to know what weight to give to many of its comments. Further, the suggestion elsewhere in the book of post mortem divine judgement (3:17, 11:9 and particularly 12:8) implies that 9:10 is not the final word of the writer or redactor.

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[21]Jon. 2:2; Ps. 16:10; 30:4; 49:16; 86:13; Pr. 15:24; 23:14.

[22]Wicked: Is. 5:14; Ps. 9:18; 31:18; 141:7; Jb. 21:13; sinners: Jb. 24:19; foolish rich: Ps. 49:15 (despite textual difficulties); scoffers: Is. 28:15, 18; immoral: Pr. 5:5; 7:27; 9:18.

[23]Nu. 16:30, 33; 1 Ki. 2:6,9; Is. 14:11, 15; Ezk. 31:15-17; 32:18-32.

[24]The various textual emendations proposed all retain *šāwᵉʾ* as complement to the verb.

[25]So in 31 of its other 52 occurrences, particularly in Ezekiel where it often parallels 'lying divinations'. In a further 13 texts, both ideas are possible. In only 9 texts, mostly as an adverb, is *šāwᵉʾ* necessarily 'worthless'. See further J.F.A. Sawyer, *THAT* 2: 882 (though he does not argue for 'evil' here) and Johnston §1.4.

Thus in these two texts the consignment of all to Sheol is qualified, in Psalm 89 by sin and judgment, and in Ecclesiastes by uncertainty of interpretation and contrasting hints of judgment.

Secondly, certain individuals otherwise presumed righteous envisage descent to Sheol: Jacob, Hezekiah, Job and the despairing author of Psalm 88.[26] However, they all speak in the context of extreme trial, whether loss, illness, affliction or abandonment, and Hezekiah, Job and the psalmist explicitly interpret their circumstances as divine judgment. Further, the selective use of *šĕʾôl* in the Joseph narrative is particularly striking. Jacob envisages sorrowful descent to Sheol on hearing of Joseph's apparent death and on fearing Benjamin's harm. But after the happy family reunion, Jacob's death, mentioned 8 times altogether, is described quite differently: he dies, he sleeps with his fathers, he breathes his last and is gathered to his people.[27] In this context, as Rosenberg perceptively comments: 'Sheol is conspicuously absent'.[28] Thus only in the event of unhappy, untimely death does Jacob envisage going to Sheol.

Conversely, where the righteous envisage a contented death or where this is narrated, there is a complete absence of any reference to Sheol. For instance: 'Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people' (Gn. 25:7). Other patriarchs are also 'gathered to their people'. Others die and are buried.[29] But Sheol remains unmentioned.

To summarise, *šĕʾôl* is almost exclusively reserved for those

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[26]Gn. 37:35; 42:38; 44:29,3; Is. 38:10; Jb. 17:13-16; Ps. 88:4.

[27]'I can die now' (46:30), 'Israel's death' (47:29), 'I lie down with my ancestors' (47:30), 'I am about to die' (48:21), 'I am about to be gathered to my people' (49:29), 'breathed his last and was gathered to his people' (49:33), 'I am about to die' (50:5), 'before he died' (50:16). Similar terms are used for Joseph's death: 'I am about to die' (50:24), 'Joseph died' (50:26).

[28]R. Rosenberg, 'The Concept of Biblical Sheol within the Context of Ancient Near Eastern Beliefs', (PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1981) 88. Unfortunately this distinctive use is largely unnoticed by other scholars, *e.g.*, J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (2nd ed; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark; 1930); E. Speiser, *Genesis* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964); B. Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading* (London: Chapman, 1977); C. Westermann, *Genesis 37-50* (Minneapolis: Augsburg; 1986). G. von Rad, *Genesis* (3rd ed; London: SCM; 1972) 354, notes a contrast—Jacob speaks 'with pathos' (mistranslated as 'pathetically' in the first English edition) on the earlier but not the later occasions—but not the distinctive use of *šĕʾôl*.

[29]Kings of Israel and Judah who die peacefully 'sleep with their fathers', regardless of their place of burial or the historian's assessment of them as good or bad; see Johnston §5.2.3.

under divine judgment, whether the wicked, the afflicted righteous, or all sinners. It seldom occurs of all humanity, and only in contexts which portray mankind's sinfulness and life's absurdity. *šĕʾôl* is not used indiscriminately for human destiny at death, and therefore should not be described simply as the Hebrew term for the underworld which awaits everyone.[30]

A similar pattern can be observed regarding *šaḥat* ('pit'), which occurs in parallel to *šĕʾôl* in Psalm 16:10. *šaḥat* refers to the underworld 15 times.[31] Generally it is the fate desired for the wicked, which Job contemplates in his extreme misfortune, but from which the righteous usually acknowledge rescue.[32] Again there is an apparent exception. Psalm 49:7-9 [Heb. vv. 8-10] seems to imply that everyone goes there, since no one can be ransomed to live forever and not see the pit.[33] However, several factors indicate that this consignment of all to *šaḥat* is partial. (a) The psalmist is discussing the oppressive rich, whose wealth is powerless to redeem them from *šaḥat*. (b) The lives destined for *šaḥat* may already be forfeited through their iniquity (*cf.* v. 6), since similar terms are used elsewhere of life already forfeited.[34] (c) Most importantly, the psalmist asserts his own redemption from *šĕʾôl* a few verses later (v. 16), clearly distancing himself from those for whom there is none. Thus *šaḥat* in Psalm 49 as elsewhere is the destiny of the ungodly rather than the godly, similarly to *šĕʾôl*.

Given this distinctive use of underworld terms, it is immediately obvious and perhaps surprising that there is no alternative destination specified for the godly. While the righteous sought to avoid Sheol, they do not envisage a clear alternative. Interestingly, an alternative fate is recorded for two godly men, Enoch (Gn. 5) and Elijah (2 Ki. 2). However, their apparent removal from earth without death, with the implication at least in Elijah's case of transfer directly into

[30]J. Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (London: SCM, 1992) 29, is one of the few scholars to notice this: '[Sheol] seems to be spoken of mainly in connection with the persons disapproved, the evildoers... or else in connection with quite wrong and disapproved things that happen to good people... Though there is no formal demarcation on moral grounds, actual talk of Sheol generally attaches to sinister characters and sinister events.'

[31]It refers to a physical pit another 8 times, see Johnston §1.5.

[32]Wicked: Ezk. 28:8; Ps. 55:24; Jb. 17:14; righteous rescued: Is. 38:17; 51:14; Jon. 2:7; Ps. 16:10; 30:10; 103:4; Jb. 33:18-30 (5 times).

[33]Whether v. 8 is read as 'a brother will redeem' (MT) or 'surely he will be redeemed' (most scholars).

[34]*pdh* ('redeem'), especially with *nepeš* ('soul') and *kippēr* ('ransom'): explicitly: Ex. 21:30; Pr. 6:35; implicitly: Jb. 33:24,28.

God's presence, does not become a paradigm for the personal expectation of others, whether prophets, psalmists or wisdom writers.

Partly because of this imbalance, scholars generally interpret the desire to avoid Sheol as a desire to be spared premature or untimely death, with Sheol as one's eventual destiny calmly accepted. Certainly some texts specify an immediate mortal crisis from which deliverance is sought. However, other texts where deliverance from Sheol is sought mention no immediate crisis.[35] Underworld language in a few texts may imply that all go to Sheol, if the interpretations offered above of Psalm 89, Ecclesiastes 9 and Psalm 49 are rejected, but even then no text specifically identifies the godly as destined for Sheol. Some Israelites, perhaps even many, may have assumed like their Semitic neighbours that the same fate awaited everyone. But their religious texts do not clearly assert this.

IV. The Holy One

In Psalm 16:10 the author affirms:

> You will not abandon my soul,
> You will not give your holy one to see the pit.

That the psalmist refers to himself as Yahweh's holy or faithful one is clear both from the psalm generally and from the immediate parallelism of 'my soul' with 'your holy one'. The danger alluded to in v. 1 may well have made him fear untimely death. But if he felt instinctively that Sheol was not a fitting fate for Yahweh's 'holy one' (*ḥāsîd*), then he could be affirming an instinctive confidence in deliverance from it, and a personal if undefined hope for or faith in some form of continued communion with Yahweh beyond death. After all, as he says in v. 11, he is on the path of life, not death, sated with divine joy and endless pleasure. The form of this continued communion with God remains tantalizingly vague: no spatial location is indicated, no name (contrasting with the name Sheol) is mentioned, no fellow beneficiaries are acknowledged, in fact no details at all are given. Only Yahweh's presence and blessing are clear. Caught in the tension between an underworld associated predominantly with the ungodly and no clear alternative for the faithful, the psalmist affirms that some alternative is eminently appropriate.

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[35] *E.g.* Pr. 15:24; 23:14.

It is perhaps this very tension which constitutes the psalm's forward-looking, prophetic perspective. By affirming something which partly fitted received views on human destiny but also transcended them, the psalm sets up a tension which awaits resolution. This resolution appears in outline at the margins of the Old Testament: Isaiah 26:19 predicts that Yahweh's dead will rise, and Daniel 12:2 notes that multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake to everlasting life or everlasting contempt. But the resolution only occurs when Christ's resurrection from the grave opens up resurrection to eternal life in God's presence as the alternative to Sheol. In this way the psalmist—why not David himself?—points forward to the one who would resolve this tension and bring life and immortality to light (*cf.* 2 Tim. 1:10).

The various aspects of the New Testament's use of the Old Testament have frequently been discussed and analysed. Sometimes this discussion leaves the impression that the apostles misappropriated their sacred Hebrew texts, whatever the internal logic of their interpretative framework. Perhaps a greater awareness of the conundrum posed by the Old Testament's one-sided presentation of post mortem fate helps to appreciate the appropriateness of their interpretation of Psalm 16.

CHAPTER 11

THE PERFECT KING OF PSALM 72: AN 'INTERTEXTUAL' INQUIRY[1]

Knut M. Heim

Summary

A summary interpretation of Psalm 72 indicates that it is a petition occasioned by a new king's accession to the royal throne in Israel. Christ was not the originally intended referent. However, considerations about the psalm's poetic imagery and 'intertextuality' as part of the Old Testament canon and tradition reveal that Psalm 72 was open to messianic readings from the start. In the New Testament, Christ was identified as the (partial) fulfilment of the psalm's intercessions and benedictions.

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[1]This essay is a revised version of a paper read on 4th July 1994 before the Old Testament Study Group of the Tyndale Fellowship in Swanwick, Derbyshire.

I. Settings

According to genre Psalm 72 has been identified as a 'royal psalm'.[2] Its life-setting is often seen in the new king's enthronement and/or a reconstructed annual festival of the king's enthronement in Israel.[3] According to this view, Psalm 72 is pre-exilic. Alternatively, Auwers and others understand Psalm 72 as a composition based on a later and already developed messianic expectation.[4] Westermann combines both views. He sees two phases in the function of royal psalms. While the monarchy still existed, they referred to the reigning kings in Israel, but after the termination of the monarchy following the exile they came to express the expectation of a new and different future king, the Messiah. This new interpretation was based on the discrepancy between Nathan's Oracle in 2 Samuel 7:1-17, which promised the unlimited continuity of the Davidic Dynasty, and the political reality of the monarchy's failure.[5] The function of royal psalms as intercessions for the king was now obliterated, and they were integrated into the post-exilic collection of the Psalter in and because of their new messianic interpretation. The editorial function of the title and subtitle of Psalm 72 are extremely important in this respect (see below).

Not one royal psalm originated as a prediction of a future saviour king; all of them originally referred to the king actually reigning at the time. A messianic meaning was given to them only after the disappearance of the Davidic dynasty. In particular, it arose from the contrast between Nathan's promise of an everlasting rule for David's house and the fact that the dynasty had ceased to be a political reality, the situation reflected in Psalm 89.[6]

The New Testament provides a third phase in the function of

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[2]I am indebted to Miss Becka Doyle, Dr. Menahem Kister, Dr. Daniel B. Wallace and Dr. William Horbury for many helpful comments.

[3]H. Gunkel, *Einleitung in die Psalmen*, (4th ed., Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), 140-71, esp. 141; R.E. Murphy, *A Study of Psalm 72 (71)* (Washington, 1948); A. Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary*, (ET; London: SCM, 1962), 502; H.-J. Kraus, *Die Psalmen* (5th. ed., Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1978), 656-57 and *idem*, *Theologie der Psalmen* (2nd ed., Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1989), 134-39; M. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, (Dallas: Word, 1990), 222.

[4]See J.M. Auwers, 'Les Psaumes 70-72: Essai de Lecture canonique', *Revue Biblique* 101 (1994), 242-57, esp. 250-56 and the literature cited there. Murphy also dates Ps. 72 in post-exilic times, assuming a common tradition with Zc. 9:10 rather than interdependency.

[5]Compare especially 2 Sa. 7:16: Surely your house and your kingdom shall be before you forever; your throne shall be established forever.

Psalm 72. Jesus Christ is identified as the fulfilment of messianic expectations expressed in the Old Testament (*cf.* Mt. 21:4-5 and Jn. 12:15-16). Consequently, Psalm 72 in its present literary context has three related but distinguishable settings. The first is its original cultic setting, the second is its literary setting within the Hebrew Psalter and the Hebrew Bible, and the third setting is provided by its literary context as part of the Old and New Testaments of the Christian Bible.

These changing settings are of paramount importance inasmuch as they open a window to the wider canonical perspective in which the psalm should now be understood.[7] Childs draws attention to the fact that Psalm 1 functions as a hermeneutical key to the whole collection of the Psalter:

> Certainly in its final stage of development, Psalm 1 has assumed a highly significant function as a preface to the psalms which are to be read, studied, and meditated upon... Indeed, as a heading to the whole psalter the blessing now includes the faithful meditation on the sacred writings which follow.[8]

Thus, the redactional position of Psalm 1 as introduction to the Psalter demonstrates a hermeneutical shift by which the incorporation of the psalms in the Hebrew Bible transforms them from being words of men to God (in the case of Psalm 72, an intercessory prayer on behalf of the king) into becoming God's word to men. From the point of view of post-monarchical Judah, Psalm 72 thus became a model prayer: this is how they should pray for the restoration of the monarchy/kingdom![9]

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[6]C. Westermann, *The Living Psalms* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), 59; *cp.* 56-57. A similar view concerning the importance of 2 Sa. 7:1-18 for messianic expectations in post-exilic Judah is expressed in R.E. Clements, 'The Messianic Hope in the Old Testament', *JSOT* 43 (1989), 3-19.

[7]For a canonical approach to the study of Psalms, see B.S. Childs, 'Psalm Titles and Midrashic Exegesis', *JSS* 16 (1971), 137-50, *idem*, 'Reflections on the Modern Study of the Psalms', in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 377-88 and *idem*, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (London: SCM, 1979), 508-25. Another important contribution to this subject is B.K. Waltke, 'A Canonical Process Approach to the Psalms' in J.S. Feinberg and P.D. Feinberg (eds.), *Tradition and Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 3-18. He identifies four stages in which a progressive perception and revelation of the text, due to the growth of the biblical canon, can be witnessed: (1) the meaning of a psalm to its author; (2) its meaning in the earlier collections of psalms during the period of the First Temple; (3) its meaning in the Old Testament as a whole; (4) its meaning in the Christian Bible as a whole (*ibid.*, 9).

[8]Childs, *Introduction*, 513.

Thus the integration of Psalm 72 in the Hebrew Psalter and its editorial comments (see also below) serve both to maintain the psalm's link to its original life-setting and give it contemporary relevance for succeeding generations of suffering Israel.[10]

These multiple settings raise the important question of the psalm's 'intertextuality', which will be treated further below.

II. Structure

Structurally, Psalm 72 is made up of requests followed by positive descriptions of the king's reign. The verb תֵּן 'give!' in v. 1 is the only direct imperative form in the poem and dominates its mood. The psalmist asks the Lord to grant the king a divine sense of justice.

The verb forms in vv. 2-7 and 9-11 express future events contingent on the fulfilment of the requests in vv. 1 and 8.[11] The jussive and indicative forms of the prefix conjugations in vv. 2-7 and 9-11 are identical. Although it is possible to translate them as jussives,[12] such a long enumeration of petitions addressed to the Lord would be virtually unique in Psalms.[13] It is therefore better to translate the

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[9]A similar approach is taken by A.C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 619.

[10]Childs, *Reflections*, 383 and 384.

[11]*Cp.* B.K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 506-12, esp. §31.6.2a. This interpretation may be supported by the LXX reading κρίνειν for יָדִין in v. 2, which, rather than pointing to another Hebrew *Vorlage* (לדין), probably represents an interpretation of Masoretic Text (MT) in accordance with the understanding adopted here.

[12]Gunkel, *Psalmen*; F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1888) *et al.*; *cf.* the non-perfective of injunction (a volitional use of the prefix conjugation) in Waltke, *Syntax*, 509-10, §31.5.

[13]To be sure, there are 'imperative psalms' which contain a relatively high frequency of imperatives, such as Pss. 95, 100, 145, 148 and especially 150. However, the imperatives are directed at humans rather than the Lord; *cp.* C. Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1981), 130-33. Yet, a somewhat different picture emerges in the royal psalms (Pss. 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132). As an exception to the rule, Psalm 20 contains a series of volitives. Yet, it is markedly different from Ps. 72 because the second person addressee is the king (2nd person suffixes), not the Lord. The same is true for Ps. 45. Similarly, Ps. 144, the first 11 verses of which Gunkel includes among the royal psalms, displays a high frequency of volitional forms (esp. vs. 5-7, 11-14). Verses 5-7, however, are an alternation of direct imperatives and jussives dependent on the latter, while most of the verbal forms in 11-14 are not prefix conjugations, but participles which derive their mood from the initial imperative.

normal as opposed to short prefix conjugations in indicative mood, unless the context suggests a volitive. In the surface structure of the psalm, vv. 2-4 describe the purpose of the request in v. 1, but pragmatically they function as a motivation for God to grant the initial petition: 'Lord, give the king sense of justice so that [= for then] he will protect the poor!'

Verses 5-7 describe the consequences arising from the righteous king's reign (vv. 1-4). If the king has divine sense of justice, so that he will faithfully act on behalf of the vulnerable in society, then everybody will fear the Lord and there will be שָׁלוֹם ('peace/prosperity') nationally.

Verse 8 is the second request in Psalm 72. The short form יֵרְדְּ for יִרְדֶּה in conjunction with *vav*-relative is most naturally taken to be a jussive.[14] The request for the king's international/universal rule (see below) is motivated by the positive results of his righteous reign which have been outlined in vv. 2-7.

Verses 9-11 set out consequences expected from the positive response to the request in v. 8. If the king will rule internationally, then everybody will fear him and there will be שָׁלוֹם nationally.[15]

Verses 12-14 form an *inclusio* with vv. 2-4 around vv. 5-7 and 9-11, with v. 8 at its centre.[16] Similar to the function of vv. 2-4 in relation to the request in v. 1, they articulate why God should answer the second request in v. 8. 'Lord, grant the king international rule, for then people will obey him and there will be שָׁלוֹם because he will save the poor!' Verses 12-14, introduced by כִּי, are syntactically connected with vv. 9-11, which seems to indicate that the international supplication to the king is caused by the overwhelming impression of his righteousness described in vv. 12-14. However, the causal connection of v. 12 extends to the longer discourse vv. 8-11. Similar to the function of vv. 2-4 in relation to the request in v. 1, they articulate the incentive, motivation and stimulus as to why God should answer the second request for the international commission of the Israelite king in v. 8.

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[14]*Cf.* Duhm (who emends to משׁל after Zc. 9:10); see also P. Joon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Subsidia Biblica 14,2; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991), §177l and Waltke, *Syntax*, §31.1.1b).

[15]Westermann sees vs. 8-11 as later additions (*Ausgewählte Psalmen*, 53). B. Duhm identified vs. 5-11 as later messianic interpolations to an original psalm for the reigning king in Israel; *Die Psalmen*, (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1899). The intricate structural chiasmus of the psalm demonstrated below contradicts these suggestions.

[16]Verses 2-4 and 12-14 are linked by common theme and vocabulary.

Verses 15-17 consist of a number of requests which take up the main themes of the preceding discourse. 'Lord, give the king long life, make everybody acknowledge him and bring שָׁלוֹם nationally and internationally!'

The anticipated answer to the petitions in vv. 1, 8 and 15-17 then leads to the concluding doxology of vv. 18-19. On the basis of the king's universal recognition, the Lord will be acknowledged universally and permanently. The postscript in v. 20 together with the superscription in v. 1a forms an editorial frame around the psalm. This creates a chiastic structure spanning vv. 1-17 (**A-B-C-D-C′-B′-A′**), as shown in the following outline.

	Superscript	(v. 1a)
A	**1st Request**	(v. 1b-c) God, **give** the king sense of justice
B	**Purpose/Reason**	(vv. 2-4) **[so that]** he will protect the poor
C	**Consequence**	(vv. 5-7) **[then]** everybody will fear you and there will be שָׁלוֹם nationally!
D	**2nd Request**	(v. 8) God, **grant** the king international rule
C′	**Consequence**	(vv. 9-11) **[then]** everybody will fear him and there will be שָׁלוֹם nationally
B′	**Reason**	(vv. 12-14) **[for]** he will save the poor!
A′	**3rd request**	(summary; vv. 15-17) God, **grant** the king long life, make everybody acknowledge him, bring שָׁלוֹם nationally and internationally!
[?]	**Doxology**	(vv. 18-19) God is acknowledged universally and permanently!
	Postscript	(v. 20)

The editorial superscript and postscript do not fit into this pattern, nor does the doxology in vv. 18-19. This seems to suggest that the corpus of the poem extends from vv. 1b- 17. The function of the doxology (vv. 18-19) and the editorial comments will be discussed further below, in connection with the psalm's 'intertextuality'.

This outline is not the only way to describe the poem's structure. Kselman, following Skehan, has suggested an alternative analysis.[17] Both detect 5 strophes, ranging from vv. 1-4, 5-8, 9-11, 12-15 and 16-17. However, Skehan arrives at his analysis via extensive textual emendations in vv. 4 and 15, as well as the syntactical observation that vv. 11, 15 and 17, similarly to v. 8, begin with ו + verb. This leads him to understand v. 8 as the closure of his second strophe. In contrast, the present study is based on pragmatic and form critical considerations of the function and content of the different sections in the psalm.

III Summary Interpretation

The following section provides a short exposition of Psalm 72 in its original pre-exilic setting. Subsections are provided with the sigla given in the preceding structural outline. The editorial comments will be treated separately.

A: In his first request (v. 1) the present king asks God to equip his successor with a divine sense of justice to accomplish his task. **B**: Verses 2-4 show the purpose of the request made in v. 1 by sketching the new king's divinely authorised and righteous rule: He will protect the poor. In detail, the psalmist expects: (a) justice for the nation, particularly the poor in society (v. 2); (b) the land will bear peace and prosperity for its people (v. 3); (c) the king will act in a three-fold manner on behalf of the underprivileged: he will deliver them (v. 4b), vindicate them (v. 4a) and punish their oppressors (v. 4c). **C**: Verses 5-7 outline the consequences arising from the king's righteous rule. All coming generations will obey God (concerning the textual variants, see below),[18] who alone can be the ultimate source of the general prosperity and justice established by the king (v. 5). The Septuagint provides a textual variant (καὶ συμπαραμενεῖ = וְיַאֲרִיךְ, 'he will endure')

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[17]See J.S. Kselman, 'Psalm 72: Some Observations on Structure', *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 220 (1973), 77-81 and P.W. Skehan, 'Strophic Structure in Psalm 72', in *idem*, *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom*, (CBQMS 1; Washington: Catholic Biblical Association, 1971), 53-58.

which seems to predict or anticipate 'eternal' life for the king. This significant alternative interpretation, which may bolster a messianic interpretation of Psalm 72, will be treated in detail below under 'intertextuality'. **D**: In v. 8, the psalmist prays that the righteous king's dominion may be(come) geographically unlimited. This surprising anticipation may either be poetic hyperbole or be taken to refer to an idealized messianic king. Again, these alternatives will be treated below under 'intertextuality'. **C'**: The consequences are shown in vv. 9-11. Everybody will (have to) obey him and contribute to Israel's prosperity.[19] **B'**: In vv. 12-14, the psalmist substantiates his request for the universal expansion of the king's authority with his expectation that the king will help the destitute and defenceless in society. **A'**: The section in vv. 15-17 takes up some of the main themes in the preceding discourse. The psalmist prays that the righteous king may have a long life[20] and that his subjects may pay him tribute, pray for him and bless him (v. 15). Furthermore, he desires that the expected שָׁלוֹם will result in increased growth in agriculture and population (v. 16) and asks that the king's good reputation may be established forever, so that all who acknowledge him will be blessed. **[?]**: The doxology in vv. 18-19 has affinity with the initial request of v. 1 and brings the prayer to a close in proclaiming a worldwide and permanent praise of God in response to the anticipated fulfilment of the petitions in the psalm. At the same time, the doxology serves to mark the end of the second book in Psalms (Pss. 42-72). This function has important corollaries for the psalm's significance on the macro-level within the whole of the Psalter, which will be treated below under 'intertextuality'.

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[18]F.Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 2, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1888), 345. Fear of the Lord in the Old Testament means righteous social conduct. It does not describe an emotional (anxiety, terror, reverence) or spiritual (faith) relationship with YHWH, but rather aims at an ethical level, *i.e.* an attitude which leads to obedience to YHWH's commandments (*cf.* Gn. 22:1-19; Ex. 20:20 + context // Dt. 5; against H.-W. Fischer-Elfert, '(ב)יראת יהוה' in Prov 15,16 und sein ägyptisches Äquivalent', *Biblische Notizen* 32 (1986), 7-10, who identifies it with the Egyptian expression *ḥrjj.t n-nṯr nfr*, which in the context of the passage he deals with clearly refers to fear). This connection is most clearly drawn in Pr. 16:6. Through faithfulness and loyalty transgression is acquitted, and with fear of the Lord one avoids evil.

[19]On vv. 8-11, see the detailed discussion below.

[20]The subject of יְחִי is either the king (Murphy, Leupold, Kraus, Dahood, Lamparter) or the needy (v. 13, so Delitzsch, Gunkel, Duhm, Weiser). LXX supports the king as subject, and as the jussive יְחִי is not part of the tricolon, it is best understood as an aphoristic acclamation, characteristically uttered at the enthronement of the new king.

The brief exposition given above indicates that the psalm does not contain propositions which necessitate a messianic interpretation. Psalm 72 in its original setting was not a prophecy predicting events or expectations projected into a distant or eschatological future. Rather, it was a prayer, an intercession for the present king, and the positive results in response to the petitions in the psalm were expected during his lifetime. However, many features in the poem lend themselves to a 'messianic' reinterpretation at a later stage in Israel's history (see above under settings). The following discussion will restrict itself to but a few. First, the editorial comments (vv. 1a and 20) provide the psalm with a literary setting within the Hebrew Bible. Secondly, the doxology (vv. 18-19) indicates that Psalm 72 closes the second book (Pss. 42-72) in the Psalter. Third, the textual variant provided by the Septuagint offers the possibility of interpreting v. 5 as an expectation that the messianic king would reign 'eternally'. Fourth, the poetic imagery in v. 8 suggests that his dominion would be universal. These features will be examined within the framework of 'intertextuality'.

IV. Intertextuality

Before going into a more detailed discussion, a few introductory comments on 'intertextuality' are necessary. The 'intertextual' approach adopted in the present study follows the insights of Gérard Genette.[21] 'Intertextuality' is defined as the study of all features that bring a given text into an open or hidden relationship to other texts.[22] It is employed as an umbrella term covering several types of relationships between texts.[23] Genette divides intertextual relationships between texts into five subcategories: (1) 'intertextuality'; (2) 'paratextuality'; (3) 'metatextuality'; (4) 'hypertextuality' and (5) 'architextuality'.[24] As Genette's terminology differs substantially from other writers in this field, it should be stressed that the following observations on 'intertextuality' apply to his five categories as a whole.

The study of intertextuality is particularly important for the study of biblical texts, because 'wherever there is a community of readers who hearken to earlier texts as powerful and evocative voices with a claim to be heard in the present, intertextual writing and reading will take place'.[25] It is important that intertextuality is not just

[21]See G. Genette, *Palimpseste: Die Literatur auf zweiter Stufe* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1993), 9-21.
[22]*Ibid.*, 9.

another tool which can be added to the 'tool-box'. Still and Worton draw attention to the fact that intertextuality lies at the very heart of the writing and reading of texts: The 'writer is a reader of texts... before s/he is a creator of texts' and a text is only available through the process of reading; what the reader perceives when s/he reads a text is due to the cross-fertilisation of what s/he reads by all the texts which the reader has read or known before.[26] Thus intertextuality calls attention to the importance of prior texts.

E. Van Wolde provides a helpful illustration.[27] The concept of intertextuality assumes that the writer can be compared to a spider weaving a web (composing a given text out of previous texts he or she knows) and catching readers in it. The writer assigns meaning to his own context and in interaction with other text shapes and forms his own text. At the same time the reader is the centre of attention, for he plays an active role in assigning meaning to the generated text in interaction with other texts he knows. In doing so, he is restrained to some extent by certain compelling strategies of the text, but at the same time has a considerable freedom to use the possibilities of the text in his own way, filling in the gaps and ellipses in the text.

To facilitate the discussion, some technical terms need explanation. Texts which quote, paraphrase or allude to other, previous texts, are focused texts. The texts to which they refer are pre-texts. Materials which appear in both the focused text and the pre-text are intertexts.[28]

Frequently, biblical texts use earlier material from the Bible to

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[23]A short introduction to the history, theories and practices of intertextuality may be found in M. Worton and J. Still (eds.), *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1990). Many of the following comments are taken from J. Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981). A concise discussion of technical vocabulary on intertextuality may be found in T. Beal, 'Glossary', in D. Fewell (ed.), *Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992) 21-24. The same author provides a short investigation of the theoretical framework within which intertextual readings operate in T. Beal, 'Ideology and Intertextuality', *ibid.*, 27-39. See also E. van Wolde, 'Trendy Intertextuality?' in S. Draisma (ed.), *Intertextuality in Biblical Writings* (Kampen: Kok, 1989) 43-49. Another important contribution to the subject of intertextuality with an significant discussion of the main intertextual relationships may be found in Genette, *Palimpseste*, esp. 9-20.

[24]A definition of these terms may be found in Genette, *Palimpseste*, 9-15.

[25]R.B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 15.

[26]Still and Worton, *Intertextuality*, 1-2.

[27]E. van Wolde, 'Trendy Intertextuality?', 46-47.

draw on the 'cultural force' which those pre-texts already bring with them as part of the canon of the Old and New Testaments. By doing this, they evoke a 'social energy' which reinforces the statements in the focused texts.[29] Thus intertexts carry their original contexts with them, for 'they latently reside in the mind of readers who know the pre-texts; the intertext carries its pre-text with it'.[30] Consequently, texts are not autonomous entities independent from extratextual reality. They are part of a wider culture with historical dimensions. In Culler's words, the meaning and significance of a work 'depends upon the horizon of expectations against which it is received and which poses the questions to which the work comes to function as an answer'.[31] Such horizons can change in the course of time, as in the case of the different settings of Psalm 72 and evidenced in the intertextual chain identified further below. This historical perspective explains the difference of the psalm's meaning and significance in its different settings (see above).[32]

Besides these more obvious intertextual relationships (quotation of and/or allusion to earlier texts), there are other types of relationships between texts. In Genette's terminology, one of these is the dimension of 'paratextuality'.[33] The 'paratext' of a given text constitutes all those features which surround it in its editorial environment: foreword, title, subtitle(s), marginal notes, textual apparatus, *etc.* Although Genette describes three more types of intertextual relationships, we shall concentrate on the two types (intertextuality and paratextuality) described above.

Before going on, three caveats are in order. Firstly, intertextuality is not restricted to the study of sources as traditionally perceived.[34] Secondly, a potential problem with intertextuality lies in the vast and undefined cultural space occupied by pre-texts in the broad sense of the word.[35] Thus, the following investigation only pays

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[28]The terminology and definitions are taken from R.A. Reese and M. Love, 'Green Texts; Recycling in Jude and Zechariah' (unpublished paper given at a postgraduate Bibical Studies seminar at the University of Sheffield). I am grateful to Miss Reese for introducing me to the subject of intertextuality and guiding me to relevant literature.

[29]See S.J. Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), esp. 5-8.

[30]Reese and Love, *'Green' Texts*, 1.

[31]Culler, *Pursuit*, 11-12.

[32]*Cf.* Culler, 13.

[33]See G. Genette, *Palimpseste*, 11.

[34]Culler, *Pursuit*, 103.

[35]Culler, *Pursuit*, 109.

attention to a limited scope of intertextual relations which are relevant to the messianic reading of Psalm 72. Thirdly, most theories of intertextuality emphasize the reader's rôle in interpreting texts at the expense of their author and his or her intention. In contrast, the present study will explain the various functions of Psalm 72 in the different focused texts by incorporating the insights gained from the study of the historical development of the psalm's settings.

V. Intertextuality and Psalm 72

Some of the features promoting a messianic reading of Psalm 72 are: (1) the editorial comments (vv. 1a and 20); (2) the doxology (vv. 18-19); (3) the textual variant in v. 5; (4) the poetic imagery in v. 8; (5) texts in the Christian Bible which quote or are quoted by Psalm 72:8. In the following investigations, intertextual features will follow this sequence rather than tracing the historical evolvement of the features in question, which might suggest another arrangement.

1. Title and Postscript (vv. 1a and 20)

The superscript in v. 1 reads לִשְׁלֹמֹה, usually translated 'by Solomon', while the postscript in v. 20 affirms כָּלּוּ תְפִלּוֹת דָּוִד בֶּן־יִשָׁי, 'concluded are the prayers of David, son of Jesse'. The first appears to assign Solomonic authorship[36] to the psalm, while the second names David as its composer. Although some of the superscriptions have originated before the collection of the Psalter,[37] frequently, they are more important 'for understanding the role of particular psalms in the context of the Psalter and in the historical context of Israel's worship than they are for understanding the original meaning and context of the individual psalms'.[38] Similarly, Zenger assigns a hermeneutical function to the authorial designations.[39] We are therefore mainly interested in the effect that these authorial designations had upon subsequent readers. But which editorial comment should be followed in assigning authorship?—Verse 20 is clear in assigning Davidic authorship to the

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[36]The majority of commentators understand the prefixed לְ as so-called *lamed auctoris* (Gunkel, Kraus, Westermann, Leupold, Lamparter, *etc.*).
[37]Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, (SBL Dissertation Series 76; Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 145-81.
[38]Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (Waco: Word Books, 1983), 31. See also Childs, *Psalm Titles*, 137-50, *idem*, *Reflections*, 377-88 and *idem*, *Introduction* 508-25.
[39]E. Zenger, 'Was wird anders bei kanonischer Psalmenauslegung?' in F.V. Reiterer (ed.), *Ein Gott—Eine Offengbarung* (Würzburg: Echter, 1991), 407.

preceding collection, including Psalm 72. In contrast, the *lamed* in לִשְׁלֹמֹה of v. 1 is ambiguous.[40] It can either mean *by* Solomon or *for* Solomon. A natural reading strategy seeking to reconcile the two statements[41] results in understanding the psalm as an intercession by David on behalf of Solomon.[42] N. Füglister comes to the same conclusion:

> If Ps. 72 is one of the 'prayers of David', as the subtitle suggests, the note לִשְׁלֹמֹה (LXX: Εἰς Σαλωμων) in its title can only mean: 'for Solomon': David composed this psalm for and with reference to the enthronement of his son—the son of David.[43]

This has important consequences. The psalm is now firmly linked with the life and experience of David, and can, even should be read in the light of this. The reader's attention is guided to Nathan's dynastic promise in 2 Samuel 7:1-17 and David's responses in 2 Samuel 7:17-29 and 2 Samuel 23:1-7. Nevertheless, after the end of the Davidic monarchy, the psalm could not continue to function in this fashion. Westermann is right in identifying a significant hermeneutic move effected by the Psalm's incorporation in the Hebrew Psalter. The title and postscript of Psalm 72 promote a messianic reading of Psalm 72 in its new literary context.

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[40]Compare the discussion in Craigie, *Psalms*, 33-35.

[41]For this notion, compare the discussion of M. Riffaterre, *Semiotics of Poetry* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1980) in Culler, *Pursuit*, 80-99. Riffaterre maintains that the characteristic feature of a poem is its unity. Consequently, when encountering problems in reading a poem, the reader begins a quest for unity, at which he arrives by a 'hermeneutic reading' in which he strives to reconciles apparent problems in its interpretation.

[42]So also M. Goulder, *The Prayers of David (Psalms 51-72)*, (JSOTS 102; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 240-46. Calvin said that the psalm contains benedictions by David put into the form of a psalm by Solomon (so Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 341), which constitutes a more elaborate effort to combine both Solomonic and Davidic authorship. The translators of the Septuagint translated Εἰς Σαλωμων in v. 1, which supports David's authorship (*cp.* Weiser, *Psalms*). Dahood agrees that the title indicated Solomonic authorship but historically thinks of a psalm for Solomon composed by a court official.

[43]N. Füglister, 'Die Verwendung und das Verständnis der Psalmen und des Psalters um die Zeitenwende' in J. Schreiner (ed.), *Beiträge zur Psalmenforschung*, (Forschung zur Bibel 60; Würzburg: Echter, 1988), 374; cited approvingly in Zenger, *Psalmenauslegung*, 407 n. 25 (author's own translation).

2. The Doxology (vv. 18-19)

Most commentators see vv. 18-19 as a later doxology which functions to close the second collection of psalms in the book.[44]

> Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
> who alone does wondrous things.
> Blessed be his glorious name forever;
> may his glory fill the whole earth!
> Amen and Amen!

While the consistent occurrence of doxologies at the ends of books I-IV (Pss. 41:14; 72:18-19; 89:53; 106:48) is suggestive, and the conclusion can only be that they did mark seams between the collections, the point at issue is this: were the doxologies added to the psalms where they now stand in order to indicate breaks between the books? Or were the doxologies original parts of the psalms? If so, why were these psalms then positioned where they now stand? G. Wilson states serious objections to the view that the doxologies are editorial additions alien to the psalms in question.

(1) The doxologies differ from one another significantly in form. (2) There is no formally related doxology to conclude the fifth book. Two explanations to this problem have been offered: (a) The Psalter originally concluded with another psalm; this is highly hypothetical; (b) Psalm 150 is a 'doxology' in itself and substitutes the other form; this complete departure from one form to another is problematic. (3) In Psalm 72, the doxology comes before the editorial remark in v. 20, which may be older than the arrangement of Psalms into five books.[45] In Psalm 106, the הַלְלוּ־יָהּ ('praise the Lord') which follows the doxology (and forms an *inclusio* with the initial הַלְלוּ־יָהּ in v. 1) serves to mark the end of the individual psalm rather than a whole group.[46] (4) In addition, vv. 18-19 have three unique characteristics distinguishing them from the other doxologies in Psalms that primarily function as editorial indicators marking the end of a book: (a) שֵׁם 'name' in v. 19 links up with שֵׁם (twice) in v. 17; (b) נִפְלָאוֹת ('wondrous things') corresponds to the great deeds expected of the righteous king; (c) אֱלֹהִים, rather than having been inserted as part of the Elohist recension in Psalms,[47] forms an *inclusio* with אֱלֹהִים in v. 1.

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[44] *E.g.* Murphy, Delitzsch, Leupold, Jenni.
[45] So also Weiser, *Psalms*.
[46] G.H. Wilson, *Editing*, 183-86.
[47] So Murphy, *Study*.

The conclusion to be drawn from these phenomena is that the doxology in Psalm 72 forms an integral part of the poem. Although it is impossible to prove that the doxology was part of the psalm from the start, it is nevertheless closely interwoven with the remainder of the poem in its present form.

E. Jenni has examined the doxologies in Psalm 41:13; 72:18-19; 89:53 and 106:48.[48] He isolates two basic formulae, a formula beginning with בָּרוּךְ, 'blessed be' and a formula with אָמֵן 'amen' (see Ps. 89:53), which he investigates from the angle of tradition history.[49] The origins of both formulae belong to the language of everyday life,[50] not the cultus. While the formula with בָּרוּךְ is a confession in response to acts of God, the formula with אָמֵן is an affirmative reaction to the word of God. Consequently, a form-critical evaluation of the doxologies must appreciate that they do not form an integral element of the psalms. Rather, they are (concluding) responses to the preceding (*cf.* Ps. 106:48). This means that the doxologies do not constitute theological teaching(s) about God as in the hymns. For interpretation this means that the point of the doxologies does not primarily lie in their propositional content, but in their function as speech-acts.[51] In conclusion, Jenni turns to a purely pragmatic investigation of the function of the doxologies and shows four different ways in which doxologies mark the end of a (group of) psalm(s): (a) the end is announced (Ps. 72:20); (b) an *inclusio* announces completion (*da capo*), as occurs with the הַלְלוּיָהּ in Ps. 106:1+48; (c) the end is artificially delayed (*ritardando*) by prolonging certain elements through change in metre or duplication, as the repetition אָמֵן וְאָמֵן ('Amen and Amen') in Pss. 72:19; 41:13 [Heb. v. 14] and 89:52 [Heb. v. 53]; (d) the end is negated, what has been said shall continue 'eternally' (לְעוֹלָם in Pss. 72:19; 89:52 [53]; מִן/מֵ עוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם, 'from everlasting to everlasting' in Pss. 41:13 [14]; 106:47 [48]). Consequently, he sees the point of לְעוֹלָם and the repetition in Ps. 72:18-19 (אֱלֹהִים and אָמֵן twice) not in its propositional content, but in its function as announcing the end.[52] The doxology was not part of the original psalm.

Several objections to and qualifications of Jenni's observations need to be raised: (1) Searle, one of the main propagators of speech-act

[48]E. Jenni, 'Zu den doxologischen Schlußformeln des Psalters', *TLZ* 40 (1984), 114-20.
[49]*Ibid.*, 115-18.
[50]*Ibid.*, 116 and 118.
[51]*Ibid.*, 118.
[52]*Ibid.*, 119-20.

theory, is at pains to demonstrate that speech-acts function in two ways. They say something literally (propositional content), but they also say something more (pragmatic function).[53] (2) The final verse in Ps. 72, v. 20, which announces the end of a group of psalms, is not part of the doxology (vv. 18-19) proper. Consequently, the doxology is not necessary to indicate the end of book 2. (3) הַלְלוּיָהּ in Ps. 106:1+48 functions to indicate the end of the individual psalm. Similarly, לְעוֹלָם and the repeated אֱלֹהִים and אָמֵן in Ps. 72:18-19 may function on the level of the individual psalm. (4) The doxology in Ps. 72:18-19 includes hymnic elements (see Jenni, 118; *i.e.*, it has propositional content!).

These considerations lead to the conclusion that the doxology in Ps. 72:18-19, including its propositional content, has a two-fold function both on the macro-level of the book of Psalms and the individual Psalm 72. It is difficult to decide whether the doxology in Psalm 72 ever formed an integral of the psalm, or not. The structural analysis above suggests that it was not, while Wilson's arguments listed above support its integrity. However, within the framework of intertextuality it is not essential to decide the issue in order to appreciate the function of the doxology. It highlights that the consequences arising from the righteous king's actions culminate in a universal and unending praise of the Lord. At the same time, the doxology functions to assign Psalm 72 a specific role within the collection of psalms in the Psalter. Similar to Pss. 2, 41 and 89, which can also be read as prayers referring to a future messianic king, Psalm 72 has deliberately been placed at a seam between collections within the Psalter because it was interpreted with reference to the Davidic covenant.[54]

3. *The Textual Variant in Verse 5*

There is some uncertainty as to the text of v. 5. The Masoretic text (MT) reads יִירָאוּךָ 'they will fear you', while the Septuagint (LXX) renders συμπαραμενεῖ = יַאֲרִיךְ ('he will endure'. The majority of modern commentators (*e.g.*, Tate; Kraus; Gunkel; Murphy; Duhm; Lamparter)[55] follow the Septuagint. Accepting one or the other textual witness changes the verse's (and consequently the psalm's) meaning radically. Therefore it is necessary to investigate the two readings.

On the level of textual criticism, the Septuagint reading recommends itself for several reasons. (a) The direct address to the Lord through the pronominal suffix ךָ- ('you') in MT seems proble-

[53]See John R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning* (Cambridge: CUP, 1986), esp. 30-57.
[54]*Cf.* Wilson, *Editing*, 209-14.
[55]In contrast, see Delitzsch and Leupold.

matic. Kraus considers it inconsistent with the form of royal psalms.[56] The opening verbs in the preceding verses (2-4) are prefix conjugations in the third person singular indicative. Therefore MT does not seem to fit the wider context in Psalm 72. (b) The subject of the verb יִירָאוּךָ in MT has no clear antecedent (Tate). (c) Syntagmatically, the verb ארך 'to endure' fits well with the rest of v. 5, which entails three temporal allusions referring to apparently 'unrestricted' continuation (Murphy).

On the other hand, there are important text-critical arguments in favour of the Masoretic text. (a) The Septuagint is the only textual witness differing from MT. (b) The pronominal suffix ךָ- in MT corresponds to the direct address to God in v. 1. (c) v. 2 also contains nouns (עַמְּךָ, 'thy people' and וַעֲנִיֶּיךָ, 'thy poor') whose pronominal suffixes refer to the Lord. (d) The nouns עַמְּךָ (v. 2) and especially עוֹשֵׁק, 'oppressor' (v. 4) may provide an antecedent for the subject of the verb יִירָאוּךָ. (e) There is a logical development of thought from vv. 1-5: when the king is given divine sense of justice (v. 1), he will protect the poor in his jurisdiction (vv. 2-4), and consequently people will obey God for fear of his judgment. (f) Even if it was granted that the pronominal suffix is difficult in the present context, it should be noted that it would then constitute the harder reading.

The arguments listed above seem to favour the Masoretic text. What is to account for the LXX reading, then? When it is translated back into Hebrew, it yields a sequence of consonants very close to the Masoretic text: compare LXX καί συμπαραμενεῖ (= ויאריך) with MT ייראוך. It is therefore not clear whether the Septuagint really had a different sequence of consonants as its *Vorlage* or whether it is the result of an unconscious alteration when copying an original which was difficult to read or arose through a misreading of the sequence of consonants (parablepsis). Conversely, it could be argued that a scribe copying MT introduced the Masoretic reading due to the same problems.

In addition to the preceding considerations, the possible interpretations of the verse should be explored. This provides further evidence as to the probability of the variant readings. If the Septuagint variant is favoured, two mutually exclusive interpretations arise.

(1) The Septuagint may reflect a messianic expectation inherent to the psalm, asking that the messianic king's life, and thus his reign, may endure forever (Duhm; Lamparter).[57] This leads Duhm to assume a late date for the psalm's composition.

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[56]*Idem*, *Psalmen*, 494; no detailed arguments.

(2) Alternatively, Psalm 72:5 is a prayer for the king's long life expressed in hyperbolic poetic imagery (Gunkel; Kraus; Tate) rather than for his eternal life (see below).

In contrast, the Masoretic text suggests a third interpretation.

(3) The poet envisages the righteous king's reign having such powerful impact on the people that they will submit to the Lord for ever (including subsequent generations).[58]

All three interpretations need to wrestle with the significance of the temporal references in vv. 5 and 7:

(1) עִם־שָׁמֶשׁ 'as long as the sun [shines]',
(2) וְלִפְנֵי יָרֵחַ 'and the moon [shows its] face',
(3) דּוֹר דּוֹרִים 'through all generations' (v. 5),
(4) בְּיָמָיו 'in his [*i.e.* the king's] days' and
(5) עַד־בְּלִי יָרֵחַ 'till the moon is no more' (v. 7).

Firstly, are they (or some of them) to be taken literally (referring to unlimited duration), or should they be understood hyperbolically? Secondly, are they (or some of them) contemporaneous? The following observations try to investigate their meaning independently from the text-critical problem of v. 5.

Expressions (1) and (2) are poetic images which seem to refer to unlimited continuation. As essential parts of God's order in creation the sun and the moon are without end, and in the Old Testament they were 'emblems of permanence' (Murphy), as can be seen from other texts dealing with the temporal continuity of the Davidic monarchy.[59]

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[57]This might be based on Nathan's Oracle in 2 Sa. 7:4-17, esp. v. 16 ('Surely your house and your kingdom shall be before you forever; your throne shall be established forever'), whereby the continuation of the Davidic dynasty would have collapsed into an enduring life of the one messianic king.

[58]*Cp.* W. Braude, *The Midrash on Psalms*, (Yale Judaica Series 13; New Haven: Yale UP, 1959), 561.

[59]This is most clearly seen in Je. 33:20-21, which talks about the promise of restoration after the predicted exile: This is what the Lord says: 'If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night no longer come at their appointed time [*i.e.*, when the sun and the moon no longer exist], then my covenant with David my servant...can be broken and David will no longer have a descendant to reign on his throne'. Similarly, there are several passages in Psalms expressing this concept. Ps. 89:30 poetically quotes from Nathan's Oracle in 2 Sa. 7:13 'I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure (*i.e.* as long as the sun and the moon exist).' After elaborating on 2 Sa. 7:14-15 in vv. 31-36, Ps. 89 expands on 2 Sa. 7:16 in vs. 37-38: 'his line will endure forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky.'

Expression (3) is less poetic. It constitutes a superlative genitive[60] and as an accusative of time[61] designates the 'remotest generation that outlasts the other generations' (Delitzsch).[62] Expression (4) in v. 7 does not refer to a period projected into the future messianic era (Duhm), but concerns the limited lifetime of the king who is the object of the psalm's intercession. Expression (5) again refers to unlimited continuation, similar to expression (2). Expression (5) is not necessarily contemporaneous with expression (4) because the שָׁלוֹם resulting from the righteous king's reign may outlast him.

An evaluation of the three interpretations mentioned above demonstrates that the third option is the most plausible. The evidence for this verdict is as follows.

Concerning interpretation (1): (a) With respect to a messianic interpretation of Psalm 72:5, it needs to be said that the psalm was most likely pre-exilic. Yet at this early stage in Israel's history a developed messianism or expectation of 'eternal' life is highly unlikely. LXX could thus be a motivated reading trying to bolster a messianic interpretation of the poem in post-exilic times (see above, Section I).[63] (b) In this case, the temporal references in vv. 5 and 7 would all be contemporaneous, *i.e.* they describe the same time span. This is at variance with the analysis of the temporal phrases given above.

Concerning interpretation (2): (a) This interpretation coincides with the request for the king's long life in v. 16. (b) It is consistent with the analysis of the temporal expressions above, as it assumes that expressions (1) to (3) and (5) are taken to be hyperbolic and expression (4), referring to the king's (limited) life-span, is contemporaneous with

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[60]See Waltke, *Syntax*, §9.5.3j.

[61]See Waltke, *Syntax*, §10.2.2c.

[62]Compare Ps. 89:5 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generation', again referring to the Davidic covenant in Nathan's Oracle.

[63]This argument could of course be accused of circular reasoning. However, what is attempted here is not to prove the correctness of one particular understanding, but rather an evaluation of the probability of the different options. As the settings of Ps. 72 have been established independently from the interpretation of Ps. 72:5, the argument is valid. Further support for the assumption of a motivated reading by LXX may be gained from looking at the overall characteristics of the Greek Psalter; as J. Schaper has demonstrated, the Septuagint of Psalms has a tendency to read messianic connotations into its translation or to amplify messianic concepts already present in its *Vorlage;* see *idem, Eschatology in the Greek Psalter* (WUNT 2, 76; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1995), 26-30, 72-126, 138-64, 174-76. Similar to the Greek variant in Ps. 72:17, LXX changes the focus of the passage from the Lord to the king (see *ibid.*, 93-96).

them. (c) Yet it runs into problems because the temporal expressions (1) to (3) and (5) all have to be hyperbolic. While this is possible, is it likely?[64] (d) In the light of these considerations, it must be asked whether the interpretation provided by those who follow option (2) is based on the evidence or whether it is a motivated reading forced by the adoption of the variant in LXX.

Concerning interpretation (3): (a) The strongest argument for this interpretation is that it is more flexible concerning the temporal expressions. It assumes that the righteous king's reign has temporally unlimited consequences for Israel. It will generate a continual fear of the Lord (expressions (1) to (3) can thus be taken literally), a long life for the king (expression (4) refers to a limited period in time) and ceaseless שָׁלוֹם in the land (expression (5) may be taken literally or hyperbolically). (b) The consequences of the king's righteousness are in line with the promise of a continuing Davidic dynasty in 2 Samuel 7:16; (*cf.* also Psalm 72,17). (c) The reverence predicted for the Lord (MT) may reflect part of David's response to Nathan's prophecy in 2 Samuel 7:18-29, namely v. 26: 'and thy name will be magnified forever, saying, "The Lord of hosts is God over Israel," and the house of thy servant David will be established before thee.'

While these considerations are not conclusive, and it must be granted that interpretations (1) and (2) are possible, the cumulative evidence, based on text-critical and internal arguments, favours the reading transmitted by the Masoretic text.

The study of the textual variant of v. 5 within the framework of intertextuality highlights how the textual apparatus provided in modern editions of the Hebrew Bible influences interpretations.[65] The variant in LXX opens up two interpretations in addition to the one based on MT. Those who follow a certain text are forced to adapt their interpretations of textual phenomena, including assumptions about the text's date and intention (interpretation [1]) and the interpretation of other parts of the psalm outside the actual reading (vv. 5 and 7; interpretation [2]). Last not least, it should be noted that the Masoretic

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[64]Two additional temporal expressions with reference to the king occur in v. 17 (לְעוֹלָם, 'forever' and לִפְנֵי־שֶׁמֶשׁ, 'as long as the sun [shines]'). While this may support a hyperbolic understanding of the expressions in v. 5 at first glance, it should be noted that it is the king's name, i.e his reputation, that shall last, not his life. Nevertheless, Ps. 21:4 [21:5] recounts how the king's prayer for a long life is granted, and the phrase אֹרֶךְ יָמִים עוֹלָם וָעֶד, 'length of days for ever and ever' is indeed hyperbolic.

[65]*E.g.* K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, *BHS* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983).

text, leading to interpretation (3), is fully compatible with the different settings identified above, including the messianic interpretation of post-exilic times.

It is impossible to prove that MT in v. 5 is indeed original. But an investigation of the consequences arising from adopting the Septuagint variant suggests that it may be a motivated reading. As such it amplifies a messianic understanding of the psalm which was prompted by the content of Psalm 72 that lends itself to a messianic reading.

4. Poetic Imagery in Verses 8-11[66]

At first sight, v. 8 appears to ask that the righteous king's dominion may become geographically unlimited: 'May he rule from sea to sea (מִיָּם עַד־יָם), and from the River to the ends of the earth (מִנָּהָר וְעַד־אַפְסֵי אָרֶץ).' This seems to be confirmed by the context in vv. 9-11:

The two verb forms in v. 9 designate subservience. The metaphor ('they will lick dust') encompasses associations with the prostration of ambassadors of subdued countries bringing tribute.

The geographic allocations in v. 10 designate the uttermost ends of the psalmist's world. Tarshish could be Tartessus (Cadiz) in Southern Spain or another city on Sardinia. The islands are located in the Mediterranean. Sheba is probably modern day Yemen in South-West Arabia, the homeland of the Queen of Sheba who paid tribute to Solomon (1 Kings 10; interestingly, this tribute is not one of political submission, but of friendly allegiance). Seba is less clear, but probably refers to Ethiopia (often mentioned alongside Cush and Egypt). The tribute of people from these remote places shows that they are within

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[66]Vs. 8-11 are often presumed to be post-exilic additions even by scholars who assume a pre-exilic origin of the remainder of the psalm. The main reasons for assuming a later insertion are: (1) it may be argued that they are more explicitly 'messianic' than the remainder of the prayer, and may thus render a later stage of the messianic concept; (2) It can be argued that the stanza interrupts the psalm's structure; (3) v. 8 may stem from Zc. 9:10, while vs. 10-11 are derived from Second Isaiah.

In contrast, we argue for the originality of the passage on structural grounds (see above). Vs. 8-11 describe the geographic and practical dimensions of the kingdom, which has been exposed in the preceding vs. 4-7 with reference to its temporal and social aspects. The subsequent vs. 12-14, on the other hand, describe the king's righteous rule which forms the basis for the universal approval he will enjoy (*cf.* Murphy, *Study*). Although vs. 12-14 continue the treatment of the 'afflicted' and the 'needy' of vs. 2-4, the two passages one after the other would appear redundant. In addition, the following treatment will show that vs. 8-11 are not necessarily messianic and v. 8 derives from Ex 23:31 rather than Zechariah or Isaiah.

his dominion. By implication, this includes all the other regions within this frame. All nations contribute to the peace of the promised land, as is expected for the eschatological reign of the Messiah in Isa 60:45, *etc.*

Verse 11 summarises vv. 9-10. The first verbal phrase ('they will bow down to him') reflects the verbs of v. 9, while the second ('they will serve him') mirrors the verbs in v. 10. The two-fold 'all' and the chiastic structure (indicating completion) indeed stress that everybody is envisaged.

Does the astonishing appeal in Psalm 72:8 express a 'direct' messianic expectation? The answer is no. It should not be forgotten that we are dealing with poetry, and that the statement might be hyperbolic. It may simply be a poetic paraphrase of the land promise in Ex 23:31, 'I will set your border(s) from the Sea of Reeds to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the Desert to the River'. At least the two starting-points in Psalm 72:8 are identical with locations in the land promise of Exodus. In addition, the word אֶרֶץ ('land/earth') is ambiguous. Rather than denoting the earth as a whole, it may simply refer to the land of Israel. The following table outlines the geographic allocations in both statements:

Text	Starting-points	Limits
Ex 23:31	'Sea of Reeds'[67]' (= Red Sea)	Sea of the Philistines' (= Mediterranean)
	'Desert' (= Negeb)	'River' (= Euphrates)
Ps. 72:8	'sea' (= Mediterranean)	'sea' (undefined)
	'River' (= Euphrates)	'ends of the land/earth' (undefined/ambiguous)

The starting-point in the phrase 'from sea to sea' is the Mediterranean, and the expression 'from the River to the ends of the earth/land' starts with the Euphrates. The limits in both phrases may be identified with the starting-points (Red Sea and Negeb) in the Exodus passage. Although it must be admitted that vv. 9-11 are a very vivid description of an apparently universal dominion, it is important to keep in mind

[67]Reference is made to the crossing of the Sea of Reeds in Ex. 13:18. Although the exact location of the crossing is unknown, the reference is undoubtedly to the Gulf of Aqaba (*cf.* 1 Kings 9:26 and see N.H. Snaith, 'יַם־סוּף: The Sea of Reeds: the Red Sea', *VT* 15 [1965], 395-98), the Northern tip of the Red Sea (B. Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974) 488).

that poetic imagery often is hyperbolic. These verses are also closely linked with the 'royal ideology' in Israel which is expressed in the 'Yahweh-King psalms'.[68] The conclusion to be drawn from these observations is that vv. 8-11 contain hyperbolic poetic imagery in their pre-exilic setting which referred to the ideal of the land promise given in Exodus 23:31.

Yet this is not the whole picture. An investigation of the passage in its post-exilic settings demonstrates that the poetic imagery in v. 8 may of course be understood universally. The limits of the promised land mentioned in Ex 23:31 have become the starting-points in Ps. 72:8 and the limits in the poetic language of Ps. 72 are deliberately undefined or ambiguous, thus creating a double *entendre*. The poetic paraphrase of Ex. 23:31 in Ps. 72:8 creates referential ambiguity by substituting 'sea' for 'Red Sea'and 'ends of the earth' for 'Desert'. Reversing the order of the geographical references opens up an even more universal interpretation: 'from the sea to the sea' can now denote 'from *any* sea to *any* sea', and 'from the river to the ends of the earth' can signify 'from the uttermost limit of the promised land to the uttermost ends of the whole earth'.[69] These lexical expansions have become part of the meaning of the poem. As Delitzsch remarks, 'The desires and hopes are expressed in such an exuberant manner, that they were not exactly fulfilled even in the most brilliant days of the kingship.'[70] The interaction between Exodus 23:31 and Psalm 72:8, however, is not exhausted on the poetic level, as the following paragraphs demonstrate.

5. *Intertextuality and Psalm 72:8*

It is no coincidence that Psalm 72:8 is quoted in an explicit messianic

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[68]*E.g.* Ps. 93: The Lord is king over the whole world and judges righteously. See esp. J. Jeremias, *Das Königtum Gottes in den Psalmen* (FRLANT 141; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987). The king who rules the people of God is the Lord's tool in world politics (Lamparter, with reference to Ps. 2:8) and is ultimately installed and held in power by divine decree. Conversely, submission to the king of Israel also entails service to the Lord. For a detailed discussion, see Kraus, *Theologie*, 152-54.

[69]*Cf.* Mi. 5:3 and 7:12, where these phrases occur in almost identical wording. Here they probably have fixed references, but again a wider interpretation is possible (*cf.* Wolff, *Dodekapropheton 4 Micha*, [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1982] 200). These parallels suggest the existence of a stock of hyperbolic expressions referring to the promised land. While it cannot be proved that Ps. 72:8 does indeed use Ex. 23:31, they indicate that the promised land was indeed a popular topic which was referred to regularly in similar terms.

[70]Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 346.

prophecy in Zechariah 9:9-10, part of which was later interpreted as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Psalm 72:8 is part of an 'intertextual chain' consisting of four links. The first link in this intertextual chain is the pre-exilic land promise in Exodus 23:31. The second link is its paraphrase in Psalm 72:8. The third link, the post-exilic messianic prophecy in Zechariah 9:9-10, quotes Ps. 72:8 almost literally. The fourth link is the quotation of Zechariah 9:9 in the New Testament Gospels (Mt 21:5 and Jn. 12:15).

Exodus 23:31 (first link): 'And I will set your bounds from the Sea of Reeds to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the Desert to the River'. The pre-text Exodus 23:31 is part of the concluding section of the so-called Book of the Covenant. In vv. 20-26, there are sequences of unconditional promises followed by exhortations leading to conditional promises. Verses 27-32 consist of unconditional promises (27-31) followed by a final exhortation. The geographical picture in v. 31 is an ideal projection of Israel's future.[71] Thus, the land promise is based on a divine covenant prompted by the Lord's gracious care for Israel. However, its fulfilment is dependent on Israel's obedience.

Psalm 72:8 (second link): 'May he rule from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.' The focused text Psalm 72 alludes to the pre-text Exodus 23:31. However, in the subtle way discussed above, the poetic alterations in the intertext amplify the pre-text's significance dramatically. In the pre-exilic time of the original setting of the focused text Psalm 72, this ideal had become part of an institutionalised intercession for succeeding Israelite kings. Although tradition saw it partly fulfilled in the glorious reign of Solomon (1 Kings 4:21), this ideal faded soon after his death. But it remained a strong part of Israel's expectations related to the monarchy. In the post-exilic setting of Psalm 72, the discrepancy between political reality and Nathan's dynastic promise was reinforced by the poor match between the land promise in Exodus and the political reality. By drawing attention to the context of the pre-text Exodus 23:31, the poet in Psalm 72:8 casts into sharp focus that the land promise was conditional, a notion that was less prominent in the Davidic covenant (*cf.* 2 Samuel 7:14). In doing so, the poet reminds his readers that the king's righteousness is paramount to the fulfilment of the hopes expressed in the psalm (v. 1).

Zechariah 9:9-10 (third link): 'Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, on a colt

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[71]Childs, *Exodus*, 486-87.

the foal of an ass...and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.' This passage foreshadows the ideal messianic king of the future. There are many intertextual links to earlier biblical material, but we shall concentrate on the relationships with Psalm 72. The projected king is righteous (*cf.* Ps. 72:1) and has experienced deliverance from danger or brings deliverance (*cf.* Ps. 72:4,13). He will proclaim peace internationally (*cf.* Ps. 72:3, 5-7, 9-11, 15-17). And he will rule universally (*cf.* Ps. 72:8). The last line of the focused text Zechariah 9:10 quotes Psalm 72:8 almost literally.[72] Only the jussive form וְיֵרְדְּ has been substituted with מָשְׁלוֹ ('his dominion'), transforming the intercession of the psalm into a prediction in the future. However, Zechariah 9:9 also foresees that this future king will be humble. In making Psalm 72:8 the intertext of this 'oracle of salvation', the prophet introduces all the positive aspirations lingering in the context of Psalm 72.[73] In this way he reinforces the grand expectations associated with the glorious future expected in the messianic age.

Matthew 21:5 and John 12:15 (fourth link): Both Matthew and John recognize a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy from Zechariah 9:9 in the accounts of Jesus' entry in Jerusalem (*cf.* Mt 21:4 and Jn. 12:16). They draw on the intertext Zechariah 9:9-10, but only quote it in part. The last line of Zechariah 9:10 refers to the universal reign of the Messiah, but is not quoted. While one might argue that this is coincidental, this gap in the quotation becomes highly significant for readers who know the context of the pre-text. They deduce that the evangelists may have intended to suggest that Christ had not yet come to rule the whole earth. In this way, both focused texts create an anticipation of another, more glorious dimension of the Messiah's future kingdom.

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[72]See also D.L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi* (London: SCM, 1995), 59-60 and C.L. Meyers and E.M. Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, (New York: Doubleday, 1993) 172-73.

[73]See M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) 501-502 and K. Larkin, *The Eschatology of Second Zechariah* (Kampen: Pharos, 1994) 75-76. Larkin notes that Ps. 72 and Zc. 9:9-10 share key words such as 'righteousness', 'the poor', 'peace' and the verb 'save', which 'serve to bind the psalm as a whole closely to the thought of Zech 9:9-10'; she assumes that in Zc. 9:9-10 the 'hymnic petition' of Psalm 72:8 has been transformed into an 'oracle of salvation' (*ibid.*, 75). R. Mason, *The Books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1977) 89-90 also draws a close connection between the two passages, but stresses the universalistic reinterpretation of Ps. 72:8 in Zc. 9:10.

V. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to demonstrate that certain features in Psalm 72, namely its different settings, its literary environment and some of its contents, encourage a messianic interpretation. The corpus of the poem extends from vv. 1b- 17. A brief exposition revealed that the psalm does not contain propositions which necessitate a messianic interpretation. In its original setting it was not predicting events or expectations in the future. Rather, it was an intercession for the present king.

However, several features in the poem lend themselves to a 'messianic' reinterpretation at a later stage in Israel's history. The editorial comments (vv. 1a and 20) provide the psalm with a literary setting within the Hebrew Bible. The psalm is now firmly linked with the life and experience of David, and should be read in the light of this. The doxology in Psalm 72:18-19 has a two-fold function both on the macro-level of the book of Psalms and the individual Psalm 72. It assigns Psalm 72 a specific role within the Psalter. The textual variant in Psalm 72:5 provided by the Septuagint translation bolsters a messianic reading of the psalm. The Masoretic text in v. 5 is fully compatible with the different settings identified above, including the messianic interpretation of post-exilic times. The poetic style of v. 8 renders it ambiguous, so that it can be understood both to refer to the land of Israel and the whole earth. This is borne out in other Old and New Testament passages which use the same text in different ways. Only a few features bolstering a messianic reading of Psalm 72 have been investigated. It is hoped that this paves the way for a more detailed exegetical study of the whole psalm against the background of the different settings identified.

In conclusion, the Church in the twentieth century is in a position similar to post-exilic Israel. As Israel perceived a discrepancy between Nathan's Oracle and the land promise on one side, and political reality on the other, so modern Christians perceive a tension between the spiritual reality of the universal kingdom of God and the social and political reality they live in. Like Israel, they can look forward to and pray for a future universal kingdom (Ps. 72:8-11) in which justice prevails (Ps. 72:2-5+12-14) and the whole world will experience peace and prosperity (שָׁלוֹם; *cf.* Ps. 72:3+5-7+9-11) because the Messiah will reign universally in a political way. Then everybody will indeed obey God (Ps. 72:5) and praise him universally (Ps. 72:18-19).

CHAPTER 12

MESSIANIC ELEMENTS IN THE CHRONICLER'S WORK

Brian Kelly

Summary

The widest diversity of scholarly opinion is represented on the question whether 'the Chronicler's Work' contains a 'messianic' or 'eschatological' outlook. Part of the difficulty arises over terminology (the meaning of 'messianism', 'eschatology' and 'theocracy'), and from disagreement over the dating and extent of 'the Chronicler's Work'. This essay accepts the growing consensus that 1-2 Chronicles (including the genealogies in 1 Ch. 1-9) is a unitary work, separate from Ezra-Nehemiah and probably from the fourth century BC. It examines important representatives of three major positions: Chronicles as a work imbued with 'messianic expectation'; as a non-eschatological ('theocratic') work; and as a work reflecting a 'royalist' outlook (the restoration of the pre-exilic Davidic dynasty). It concludes that the last position may reflect the author's outlook, but suggests that there are deeper transitions of thought, so that one may detect an 'implicit messianism' in the work.

I. Introduction

The Chronicler's work comprises the largest continuous corpus of writing from the post-exilic period, and as such, is an invaluable witness to the social and theological outlook of the writer's era.[1] The questions have been frequently raised whether the work harbours 'messianic' or 'eschatological' beliefs, or whether it contributed in any significant way to the development of those concepts which came to embody the hope of redemption, especially in later Judaism. There is no scholarly consensus on these matters, and the range of modern opinion can be broadly summarized as follows:[2]

(1) Chronicles possesses a messianic expectation that focuses upon an ideal Davidic king;[3]

(2) Chronicles expresses hopes of a dynastic restoration, either at the time of Zerubbabel or later (*i.e.*, a 'royalist' hope in continuity with the pre-exilic Davidic line rather than a 'messianic' expectation);[4]

(3) Chronicles has an 'eschatology' (*i.e.*, a hopeful futurist perspective for the post-exilic community) which nevertheless does not involve monarchic restoration or a messianic expectation;[5]

(4) Chronicles is basically non-eschatological and non-messianic.[6]

The fundamental questions in this discussion concern the meaning of the Chronicler's distinctive portrayal of David and Solo-

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[1]*Cf.* P.R. Ackroyd, *The Chronicler in his Age* (JSOTS 101; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991). See also I. Kalimi, *The Book of Chronicles. A Classified Bibliography* (Jerusalem: Simor, 1990) 91-110, for a substantial listing of works relating to these issues.

[2]These categories are a modification of those suggested by W. Riley, *King and Cultus in Chronicles. Worship and the Reinterpretation of History* (JSOTS 160; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 30-31. Riley fails properly to distinguish a 'royalist' interpretation from a 'messianic' one.

[3]J.W. Rothstein and J. Hänel, *Das erste Buch der Chronik* (Leipzig: Reichart, 1927); G. von Rad, *Das Geschichtsbild des chronistischen Werkes* (BWANT 54; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1930); A. Noordtzij, 'Les Intentions du Chroniste', *RB* 49 (1940) 161-68; G.J. Botterweck, 'Zur Eigenart der chronistischen Davidsgeschichte', *TQ* 136 (1956) 402-35; A.-M. Brunet, 'La théologie du chroniste: théocratie et messianisme', in J. Coppens *et al.* (eds), *Sacra Pagina I* (Ducolot: Gembloux, 1959) 384-97; W. Stinespring, 'Eschatology in Chronicles', *JBL* 80 (1961) 209-19; R. North, 'Theology of the Chronicler', *JBL* 82 (1963) 369-81 (However, North favours a 'royalist' interpretation in his article in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 1989); M. Saebø, 'Messianism in Chronicles? Some Remarks to the Old Testament Background of the New Testament Christology', *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 2 (1980) 85-109; T.S. Im, *Das Davidbild in den Chronikbüchern. David als Idealbild des theokratischen Messianismus für den Chronisten* (Europäische Hochschulschriften; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985);

mon, and the significance in his work of the Davidic covenant. The matter also turns partly on definitions, and more decisively, on the limits and dating of the Chronicler's work. Two comments may be offered briefly here.

(1) M. Saebø[7] rightly remarks that 'messianism' and 'eschatology', while having many points of contact in harbouring hopes of future salvation for Israel, are not synonymous concepts; while J. Becker[8] observes that 'the figure of a savior, more specifically a royal figure of Davidic lineage, is essential to any definition of messianism.' While it is difficult to keep terms precisely delineated, especially in dealing with concepts that have undergone considerable development over a lengthy historical period, in our discussion 'messianic' denotes more properly an ideal Davidic figure, in particular such as was the focus of prophetic expectation (*cf.* Mi. 5:2 [Heb. v. 1]; Is. 11:1-9). Additionally, it must be remarked that the term 'theocracy' has often been used ambiguously in discussion of the

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[4]D.N. Freedman, 'The Chronicler's Purpose', *CBQ* 23 (1961), 436-42; F.M. Cross, 'A Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration', *JBL* 94 (1975) 4-18; J.D. Newsome, 'Toward a New Understanding of the Chronicler and his Purposes', *JBL* 94 (1975) 201-17 (these three associate Chronicles with the restoration under Zerubbabel); H.G.M. Williamson, 'Eschatology in Chronicles', *TynB* 28 (1977) 115-54; *idem*, 'The Dynastic Oracle in the Books of Chronicles', in A. Rofé and Y. Zakovitch (eds.), *Isaac Leo Seeligmann Volume: Essays on the Bible and Ancient World*, III (Jerusalem: Rubinstein, 1983) 305-18; M. Oeming, *Das Wahre Israel. Die 'Genealogische Vorhalle' 1 Chronik 1-9* (BWANT 128; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1990) is tentative on this question; similarly K. Strübind, *Tradition als Interpretation in der Chronik: König Josaphat als Paradigma chronistischer Hermeneutik und Theologie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991);

[5]R. Mosis, *Untersuchungen zur Theologie des chronistischen Geschichtswerkes* (FTS 92; Freiburg: Herder, 1973), esp. pp. 164-69, 211-14 (argues that the Solomonic period is presented as a 'type' of end-time expectation); S. Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* (ET; BEATAJ 9; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989) 493-504, denies that Chronicles is 'eschatological in any sense of the word', but takes a more moderate view in her 1993 commentary (*cf.* p. 1077);

[6]W. Rudolph, 'Problems in the Book of Chronicles', *VT* 4 (1954) 401-409; *Chronikbücher* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1955); O. Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology* (ET; Oxford: Blackwell, 1968); A. Caquot, 'Peut-on parler de messianisme dans l'oeuvre du Chroniste?', *RTP* 16 (1966) 110-20; O.H. Steck, 'Das Problem theologischer Strömungen in nachexilischer Zeit', *EvTh* 28 (1968) 445-58; P.D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975); J. Becker, *Messianic Expectation in the Old Testament* (ET; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 79-82; R. Mason, *Preaching the Tradition. Homily and Hermeneutics After the Exile* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990); Riley, *King and Cultus*.

[7]'Messianism in Chronicles?', 87ff.

[8]*Messianic Expectation*, 79.

Chronicler's work, sometimes denoting the sociopolitical rule of cultic personnel over the cult community (with the implication that this entails an anti-eschatological outlook[9]), at other times signifying Yahweh's rule exercised through the Davidic line. The former concept is more accurately described as 'hierocratic' rather than 'theocratic', since the term 'theocracy' is itself neutral with regard both to the dynasty and eschatological hopes.[10]

(2) The boundaries and dating of the Chronicler's work are a matter over which there has been a considerable shift of opinion in recent years, and a decision made at this level has direct bearing on the interpretation of the work. The previous consensus held that Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah constituted a unity, a continuous history of the cult community from Davidic times into the middle Persian period.[11] While this view has been modified in some quarters in favour of the opinion that 'the Chronicler's work' (*i.e.*, Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah as a literary unity) is the product of successive redactions over a lengthy period,[12] a different consensus has been developing since 1968, which holds that Chronicles is a separate work from Ezra-Nehemiah, possessing its own literary structure and ideological concerns. The great majority of articles, monographs and commentaries since that time have supported and extended the basis for this judgment, which is accepted in this discussion.[13] If it is further accepted that the genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1-9 are original to the work (including the list in 1 Ch. 9:2-17, which appears to be derived

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[9]*E.g.*, Rudolph, Plöger, Hanson.

[10]*E.g.*, Im, *Das Davidbild*, 180-85 and the literature cited there.

[11]*Cf.* T. Willi, *Die Chronik als Auslegung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972) 12-47, for a review of research since Wellhausen.

[12]Cross, 'Restoration', developed Freedman's ideas about the original setting of the Chronicler's work, arguing that 'Chr 1' (*c.* 520-515 BC) was roughly equivalent to 1 Ch. 10-2 Ch. 36 + Ezr. 1:1-3:13, and was eventually expanded into Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah. However, there are serious literary and ideological difficulties with this theory. Newsome develops his ideas independently of this theory, but must assume that 1 Ch. 1-9 was not originally part of the work. *Cf.* also M.A. Throntveit, *When Kings Speak: Royal Speech and Royal Prayer in Chronicles* (SBL Dissertation Series 93; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987).

[13]The foundation study was S. Japhet, 'The Supposed Common Authorship of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Investigated Anew', *VT* 18 (1968) 330-71, amplified on wider linguistic and ideological grounds by H.G.M. Williamson, *Israel in the Book of Chronicles* (Cambridge: CUP, 1977) 5-82, and R.L. Braun, 'Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah: Theology and Literary History', in J.A. Emerton (ed.), *Studies in the Historical Books of the Old Testament* (SVT 30; Leiden: Brill, 1979) 52-64.

from Ne. 11:3-19, and especially the list of post-exilic Davidic descendants in 1 Ch. 3:17-24), then Chronicles should probably be assigned to some point in the fourth century.[14] In any case, the reference to 'darics' in 1 Chronicles 29:7 appears to preclude composition before 515 BC, the earliest known date at which this coin was minted.[15]

If these conclusions about the extent and dating of the Chronicler's work are correct, they have important implications for assessing possible messianic or eschatological dimensions in the work. First, it has often been observed that Ezra-Nehemiah reflects little or no interest in the Davidic dynasty and covenant where the post-exilic community is concerned. On the assumption that Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah constitute a unitary work, this fact has been taken to represent the Chronicler's own view, notwithstanding the evident centrality of the Davidic covenant in 1 and 2 Chronicles. Thus, for example, W. Rudolph (p. xxiii) argued that the description in Nehemiah 12:44-13:3 of the restored 'theocratic' (*i.e.*, hierocratic) post-exilic community was intended to represent the climax of 'the Chronicler's work'. According to Rudolph, 'the Chronicler's history' demonstrated that the Davidic dynasty had achieved its essential task of establishing the temple and cult, and was no longer a focus of interest in its own right. However, as a separate composition Chronicles must be read on its own terms, without introjecting the outlook of Ezra-Nehemiah.[16] Secondly, as a work of the fourth century Chronicles cannot be linked with the rebuilding of the temple under Zerubbabel's leadership and the hopes of political restoration that may have centred on this Davidide. This fact excludes the 'Restorationist' interpretation as proposed by Freedman, Cross and Newsome, but leaves open the 'royalist' understanding of the dynastic oracle, 'the perpetuation into the post-exilic period of a continuing expectation of the reemergence of a ruling Davidic household.'[17]

Within these parameters we may now examine the three major ways in which the presentation of the Davidic covenant and dynasty in Chronicles has been understood: (1) as an expression of 'messianic' expectation; (2) non-eschatologically, as the means whereby the

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[14]On the originality of the genealogies (including 1 Ch. 3), *cf.* Oeming, *Das Wahre Israel*.
[15]Williamson, 'Eschatology', 123-26.
[16]*Cf.* S. Japhet, 'The Relationship Between Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah', in J.A. Emerton (ed.), *Congress Volume: Leuven 1989* (SVT 43; Leiden: Brill, 1991) 298-313.
[17]Williamson, 'Dynastic Oracle', 318.

temple and cult were established; (3) as reflecting a hope of 'royalist' restoration.

II. 'Messianic' interpretation of Chronicles

This influential approach depends essentially on two claims: (1) that the Chronicler has altered the dynastic oracle (1 Ch. 17:11-14 // 2 Sa. 7:12-16) to make it refer not to Solomon but to a more distant descendant, the Messiah; and (2) that the Chronicler has idealized the historical David to present him as a 'type' of the Davidic king of prophetic expectation (Rothstein and Hänel, p. x). Most studies in this line concentrate on the *Davidbild* in 1 Chronicles 11-29; Dillard modifies this slightly to include Solomon in a composite portrayal that reflects the unity of his reign with David's.[18] Commentators frequently refer to the omission of large sections of the *Vorlage* that reflect negatively on David and Solomon,[19] and contrast this with the Chronicler's heightened portrayal of these kings as zealous promoters of the cult who enjoy the full support of the people and the acclaim of the surrounding nations. According to proponents of the 'messianic' view, this presentation is intended to evoke the future ideal Davidic ruler.[20] These arguments must be considered in detail.

1. 1 Chronicles 17:11-14 and 2 Samuel 7:12-16

In the dynastic oracle in 2 Samuel 7:12-16 Yahweh promises David (v. 12b): 'I will raise up your seed after you, who will come forth from your body (אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִמֵּעֶיךָ), and I will establish his kingdom.' It is clear from v. 13 that these words refer to Solomon, who is nominated by Yahweh as the builder of his temple. The promise has every appearance of being unconditioned and eternal: Yahweh may chastise Solomon for wrongdoing (v. 14b), but will never withdraw his love

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[18]R.B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles* (Waco: Word, 1987): the Chronicler 'presents us not only the David and Solomon of history, but also the David and Solomon of his messianic expectation' (p. 2); *cf.* also pp. 72-73 on 2 Ch. 9:13-28. Dillard is followed by S. Romerowski, 'L'Espérance Messianique dans les Chroniques', *Hokhma* 34 (1987) 37-63.

[19]Notably the Bathsheba episode and the so-called 'Succession Narrative' in 2 Sa. 11-20, and the account of Solomon's apostasy in 1 Ki. 11.

[20]*Cf.* Stinespring, 'Eschatology in Chronicles', 213, on the omission of 2 Sa. 11-20: 'the Chronicler is concerned with *Heilsgeschichte* and eschatology; the new David in the new age would not be guilty of such conduct, nor would members of his court ever think of rebuking God's Anointed for any reason whatever.'

(חֶסֶד) from him (v. 15). David is thus assured in v. 16: 'Your house and your kingdom will be made sure for ever before me; your throne will be established for ever.' By contrast, in the Chronicler's version (1 Ch. 17:11-14) David is promised 'seed after you' (אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה מִבָּנֶיךָ), the reference to Solomon being chastised is omitted, and 2 Samuel 7:16 is transformed to read: 'I will set him over (in) my house and my kingdom [בְּבֵיתִי וּבְמַלְכוּתִי] for ever, and his throne will be established for ever.'

Each of these changes has been explained as supporting a 'messianic' reading of the work. In its original and strongest form, this line of interpretation appears to go back to C. F. Keil,[21] who argued (from analogy with Gn. 17:16 and Ec. 3:20) that the expression אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה מִבָּנֶיךָ signified '[one] who will arise from your sons', and so referred not to David's immediate son Solomon but to a more distant descendant (p. 223): 'The seed after David, which will arise from his sons, is the Messiah, whom the prophets announced as the Son of David, whose throne God will establish for ever (v. 12).' There would be no question of such an exalted figure being chastised, hence the omission of 2 Samuel 7:14b. Finally, 1 Chronicles 17:14, which announces the eternal reign of David's seed in Yahweh's 'house and kingdom', is taken to be a promise for the future, 'viz. that the house and kingdom of David will be established for ever only under the Messiah' (p. 224).

Keil's arguments were mediated by G. von Rad (1930), and are reflected obliquely in several influential studies.[22] However, they face a number of weighty objections.

(1) H.G.M. Williamson[23] disputes Keil's grammatical arguments and concludes that the contentious phrase אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה מִבָּנֶיךָ is in itself ambiguous. The wider context must therefore determine the meaning. 1 Chronicles 17:12 evidently refers to Solomon the chosen temple builder, while other references to the oracle in 1 Chronicles 22:8-9; 28:5-6 and 2 Chronicles 6:9 make it clear that Solomon is intended.[24] Nevertheless, as we note below, the Chronicler also applies the dynastic promise to kings later than Solomon (*cf.* 2 Ch. 13:5; 21:7; 23:3).

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[21]C.F. Keil, *Biblischer Commentar über die nachexilischen Geschichtsbücher: Chronik, Esra, Nehemia und Esther* (Leipzig: 1870) 163-64.
[22]Von Rad, *das Geschichtsbild*, 123-26; M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, I (Halle: Niemeyer, 1943); Botterweck, 'Eigenart', 422-23; Im, *Das Davidbild* 120-24; *cf.* E.L. Curtis and A.A. Madsen, *The Books of Chronicles* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1910) 227; Rothstein and Hänel, *Erste Buch*, xliii, 326; Brunet, 'La theologie', 505; Mosis, *Untersuchungen*, 90.
[23]'Dynastic Oracle', 307-10.

(2) The omission of 2 Samuel 7:14b from the Chronicler's version is susceptible of other explanations than the 'messianic view'. For example, S. Japhet[25] holds that the Chronicler omitted the words to soften the central (unconditional) promise of 2 Samuel 7 in favour of 'the Deuteronomistic redaction of I Kings, which does see God's promise as conditional'; this view is said to be reflected elsewhere in the conditions of obedience placed upon Solomon. Moreover, Japhet argues, the Chronicler presents Solomon as 'flawless' in 2 Chronicles 1-9, and so suppresses any hint of wrongdoing on his part. Williamson[26] (see below) maintains that the omission reflects the Chronicler's special understanding of the critical role which Solomon played in the establishment of the dynastic promise. According to Williamson, the Chronicler assigned Solomon a role equal to David in establishing the promise, through obedience in two matters: building the temple, and a general obligation to obey God's commands throughout his reign (*cf.* 1 Ch. 28:7, 9; 2 Ch. 6:16; 7:17-18), and if he had failed in either respect, the dynasty would have failed with him. Williamson holds that mention of sin and chastisement in 2 Samuel 7:14b applies to 'the whole future line of Davidic kings', and so would have been irrelevant in the Chronicler's context, where the focus is solely upon Solomon. 'The possibility was not foreseen that he would fail personally, but the dynasty nevertheless endure.'[27] A different view is proposed by M. J. Selman,[28] who argues that the point of the omission is not to conditionalise the promise but rather to highlight God's *unconditional* commitment to David's house: the verse affirms that not even human sin will undermine or divert God's declared purposes. Obviously these views are at odds with each other, and the very diversity of these suggestions indicates that the true significance of the omission can be deduced only from the wider context of the work.

(3) The form of 1 Chronicles 17:14 does indicate that the Chronicler's thought is, in the strict sense of the word, 'theocratic': the

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[24]S. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles. A Commentary* (Westminster/John Knox: Louisville, 1993) 333, suggests that the Chronicler's usage reflects more euphemistic language, or may be intended to strengthen the literary link with v. 13 ('one of your sons'/'he shall be my son')

[25]*I & II Chronicles*, 334; *Ideology*, 463-67.

[26]'Dynastic Oracle', 310ff; *cf.* the discussion below.

[27]H.G.M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1982) 136. But does this properly represent the meaning of 2 Sa. 7:14? The focus of these words is surely upon Solomon, who is certainly 'chastised with the rod of men' (*cf.* 1 Ki. 11:14-40).

[28]M.J. Selman, *1 Chronicles* (Leicester: IVP, 1994) 180.

recipient of the dynastic promise will reign as Yahweh's representative in his (Yahweh's) kingdom. The explicit connection which the Chronicler draws between the Davidic covenant and Yahweh's kingdom is one of the most striking features of his outlook. However, it should not be concluded that the reference of the oracle is exclusively or even primarily to the future.[29] In 1 Chronicles 28:5 David states that Yahweh 'has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of Yahweh's kingdom over Israel', while his accession is affirmed in similar terms in 1 Chronicles 29:23 and 2 Chronicles 9:8. The notion that the Davidic kingdom has been appointed to be the earthly expression of Yahweh's kingdom is not confined to Solomon's reign, but is reflected also in Abijah's declaration that 'Yahweh's kingdom... is in the hands of David's descendants' (2 Ch. 13:8). In each case, the *present* manifestation of the kingdom is in view.

2. *Idealisation of David and Solomon?*

The perception that the Chronicler has idealized David (and Solomon) is widespread, even among recent commentators who reject the notion that such a portrayal is intended to evoke messianic hopes.[30] However, the argument that the author has idealized these figures (for whatever reason) is at best a subjective interpretation, and does not stand up to close scrutiny.

(1) The omission of such passages as 2 Samuel 11-20 and 1 Kings 11 is not to be explained as 'drawing a veil over the scandalous falls of saints'.[31] As Selman observes (pp. 49-50), the Chronicler's real interest centres on the role of David and Solomon within God's

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[29]*Contra* von Rad (*Das Geschichtsbild*, 126) who remarks: 'wenn man zudem noch bedenkt, daß diese Anschauung in einer Zeit zum Ausdruck kam, die keinen empirischen König kannte, sondern in starker Königserwartung lebte, so wird man hier ohne Gefahr von einer *messianischen* Vorstellung reden dürfen.' Von Rad holds that mention of 'the Davidide sitting on God's throne in God's kingdom' points to 'endzeitlichen Hoffnungen, die in dem Begriff der Malkuth Jahwes zusammengefaßt waren.' The meaning of בית in this verse is disputed; Japhet (*I and II Chronicles*, 335) takes it to signify 'Israel', but the natural sense of the context implies the temple. Riley (*King and Cultus*, 74) takes the verse to mean that 'Solomon will be a vassal to Yahweh, stationed for duty in the Temple', but this nowhere corresponds to the Chronicler's understanding of Solomon's role. It is better to think of the Davidic king's authority *over* the temple, which is exactly what we find in 2 Chronicles.

[30]*Cf.* W. Brueggemann, *David's Truth in Israel's Imagination and Memory* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 99-107; S.J. de Vries, 'Moses and David as Cult Founders in Chronicles', *JBL* 107 (1988) 639; Riley, *King and Cultus*, 31-32, 57-58; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 633.

covenant purposes. The most important fact is that the gift of kingship is bestowed upon this family and is confirmed by Solomon's obedience in building the temple. In order to concentrate on this theme, the author omits episodes from the *Vorlage* which reflect positively on David and Solomon (*e.g.*, 2 Sa. 9; 1 Ki. 3:16-4:34), as well as negative features from David's private life. Conversely, David's transgressions in the cultic-religious realm stand out all the more reprehensibly: in 1 Chronicles 13 he fails to appreciate the proper character of God's holiness in the first abortive attempt to fetch the ark, with disastrous consequences; and in the account of the presumptuous census in 1 Chronicles 21 a number of redactional changes from the *Vorlage* heighten David's culpability.[32] This latter account is really the pivot of the Chronicler's Davidic narrative: the temple which is built on the site of David's altar (1 Ch. 22:1) and which represents Yahweh's rule, is appointed for atonement and forgiveness (*cf.* 2 Ch. 7:14), and David above all exemplifies Israel's need for this.[33] Neither does the Chronicler pass over Solomon's failings in silence. The reference in 2 Chronicles 9:29 to 'the records of Nathan the prophet' and 'the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite' most probably denotes the accounts in 1 Kings 1 of the accession and the consequences of Solomon's late apostasy in 1 Kings 11:29-39 (*cf.* also 2 Ch. 10:15).[34] Criticism from the *Vorlage* of Solomon's rule is also retained in 2 Chronicles 10:4, 10, 11, 14.

Since the two major arguments for a messianic reading of Chronicles fall way, we must conclude that the work is not overtly or dominantly messianic in its outlook; however, as we indicate below, that is not to say that such elements are totally absent from the book.

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[31]J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomona to the History of Ancient Israel* (ET; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1885) 178.

[32]*Cf.* Joab's comment in v. 3d, 'Why should (the king) bring guilt upon Israel?'; v. 6; and the intensification of David's confession of guilt in v. 17.

[33]*Cf.* W. Johnstone, 'Guilt and Atonement: The theme of 1 and 2 Chronicles', in J.D. Martin and P.R. Davies (eds), *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane* (JSOTS 42; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986) 123.

[34]Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 236-37. This is challenged by Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 646: 'the Chronicler did not cite the passages in question—especially I Kings 1-2; 11—precisely because the historical picture he wished to portray demanded their omission. It seems rather doubtful that he would direct his readers to the very material he had intentionally avoided.' But this begs the question of the Chronicler's true intention.

III. Chronicles as a non-eschatological work

Standing at the opposite extreme to the above view, numerous studies since Rudolph (1954) have maintained that the Chronicler foresees no continuing role for the Davidic covenant in its dynastic form, either in a messianic or royalist-restorationist sense. While some commentators argue that the writer understood God's purposes to be essentially realized within the temple community of his own time and so did not look to any significant change in its conditions,[35] others hold that the Chronicler understood the Davidic dynasty to have had only a provisional cultic purpose. Two important representatives of this view are considered here.

1. A focus on Solomon and the Temple?

Caquot (1966) takes Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah to constitute a unitary work, but this does not significantly affect his approach to the question. He sees the Chronicler's emphasis as falling squarely upon Solomon rather than David: in contrast to his father, Solomon is depicted as impeccable and his reign as 'l'apogée de la monarchie judéenne' (p. 116). This presentation (which, of course, conflicts with 1 Ki. 11) is a corollary of the love which the Chronicler has for the cultic institutions which Solomon put in place. Constructing the temple was the essential task of his reign. Caquot remarks (p. 118) on David's words to Solomon in I Chronicles 28:20 ('Yahweh will not leave you until all the work for the service of the temple of Yahweh is finished'): 'Peu importe ce qui doit avenir après; pour le Chroniste l'oeuvre de la dynastie davidique est achevée quand le Temple est bâti.' In support of this view, Caquot offers the following textual arguments:

(1) In 2 Chronicles 6:42, at the conclusion to his temple dedication prayer (in contrast to 1 Ki. 8:51-53, an appeal based on the exodus deliverance) Solomon invokes God: 'Yahweh God, do not turn away the face of your anointed ones [מְשִׁיחֶיךָ]; remember the faithful deed of David [חַסְדֵי דָוִיד] your servant.' The phrase חַסְדֵי דָוִיד (*cf.* Is.

[35]Rudolph and Becker explain this alleged outlook on the grounds that the Chronicler's interest in David and Solomon lay not in their dynastic significance but in their founding and legitimating the Jerusalem cult (the Chronicler was opposing the 'Samaritans'); while Plöger attributes to the Chronicler's (temple) circle an inherently anti-eschatological understanding of the cult community (such as he purports to find in the Priestly writing). Hanson (*Dawn of Apocalyptic*) and E. Bickerman (*From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees*, New York: 1947) ascribe an attitude of pro-Persian political quietism to the Chronicler. There are, however, difficulties with each of these proposed ideological backgrounds to the work.

55:3b) is interpreted as a subjective genitive, referring to the pains David took in establishing the cult, rather than an objective genitive referring to the Davidic covenant (*cf.* the meaning of חֲסָדִים as 'faithful works' in 2 Ch. 32:32; 35:26).[36]

(2) The Chronicler has suppressed most of the texts from Kings which mention the preservation of a 'lamp' for David or the promise to Davidic descendants of divine action לְמַעַן דָּוִד (1 Ki. 11:13, 32, 36; 19:34; 20:6; only 2 Ki. 8:19 is retained in 2 Ch. 21:7). This indicates how little the Chronicler was interested in the Davidic line once its cultic work had been accomplished.

(3) The statement in 2 Chronicles 13:5 ('Don't you know that Yahweh, the God of Israel, has given the kingship over Israel to David and his sons forever by a covenant of salt?') is an affirmation by Abijah of his legitimacy over against the would-be usurper Jeroboam, rather than a profession of the Chronicler's own faith (p. 119).

It would take us beyond the confines of this essay to answer these points in detail. It must suffice to indicate briefly our differences with them, and where the reply is more fully argued.

(1) First, as we have maintained above, the Chronicler does not actually idealize Solomon, but rather concentrates on the abiding achievements of his reign within God's purposes for Israel. It is now accepted that the Chronicler presents the reigns of David and Solomon as a unity, so that each contributes indispensably to the other in the building of the temple and the foundation of the dynasty.[37] It misreads the Chronicler's intention to place Solomon on a pedestal above his father.

(2) Concerning Caquot's textual arguments: The objective genitive sense of חַסְדֵי דָּוִיד in 2 Chronicles 6:42 ('faithfulness shown to David') is preferable in the light of vv. 14-17, and appears to be the meaning of the verse in its source, Isaiah 55:3.[38] The meaning of חֲסָדִים in 2 Chronicles 32:32; 35:26 is not relevant in this context, since these verses do not have the precise phrase חַסְדֵי דָּוִיד. The texts which refer to a 'lamp' for David occur chiefly in passages which the author omitted or reformulated for other reasons. Finally, Abijah's speech (2 Ch. 13:4-12) is almost certainly a vehicle of the Chronicler's own outlook,

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[36]*Cf.* A. Caquot, 'Les grâces de David. A propos d'Isaïe 55:3*b*', *Semitica* 15 (1965) 45-59.
[37]*Cf.* H.G.M. Williamson, 'The Accession of Solomon in the Books of Chronicles', *VT* 26 (1976) 351-61.
[38]*Cf.* H.G.M. Williamson, '"The Sure Mercies of David": Subjective or Objective Genitive?', *JSS* 23 (1978) 31-49.

as studies of speeches in the book indicate.[39]

2. A Theological Reinterpretation of the Davidic Covenant?

Riley (1993) distinguishes Chronicles from Ezra-Nehemiah and places the work in the later Persian period. He develops an extensive argument that Chronicles arose from the need of the post-exilic community to represent the meaning of the Davidic House in theological rather than political terms (through the royal temple ideology of the ancient Near East). Riley surmises that the author intended the Saul narrative (1 Ch. 10) as a 'paradigm' in which the king who 'fails to seek Yahweh in the cultus' will have his dynasty terminated (p. 66). This 'paradigm' is said to act both positively and negatively throughout the account from 1 Chronicles 11 to 2 Chronicles 36, reaching its climax in the description of Josiah's reforms and Passover in 2 Chronicles 35:20, when 'the Temple and its cultus are declared established' (p. 155). According to Riley (pp. 138-39), Josiah's religious activity 'brings the Temple ritual to a new height which it had not even seen in its *Urzeit*', and so this king's sudden declension from grace in opposing Neco and dying in battle mark the Chronicler's note of judgment on the dynasty itself, 'in a manner reminiscent of the Saul paradigm'. The final episodes of the narrative are said to depict the definitive transfer of kingship away from the Davidic dynasty into the hands of Cyrus; and yet the Davidic covenant remains an enduring reality for the post-exilic community in the form of the temple and its cult (p. 201).

There are several substantial objections to Riley's proposals.

(1) Although the theme of 'unfaithfulness' (מעל) and dispossession from the land on account of that does run through the narrative (*cf.* 1 Ch. 10:14; 2 Ch. 29:6; 33:19; 36:14), the author understands the Davidic dynasty to mark a decisive break with the period of Saul (1 Ch. 17:13).

(2) It is difficult to think of 2 Chronicles 35:20 as the climax of the post-Solomonic narrative (an honour which surely belongs to Hezekiah's reign, 2 Ch. 29-32[40]). Moreover, 2 Chronicles 34:27-28 (which has been characteristically redacted by the author) indicates a very positive judgment on Josiah, notwithstanding the circumstances of his death.

(3) It is equally difficult to think that the Chronicler would

[39]*Cf.* Throntveit, *When Kings Speak;* Mason, *Preaching the Tradition.*
[40]*Cf.* Williamson, *Israel,* 119-31

have understood the Davidic kingship to have been transferred to Cyrus, when passages such as 1 Chronicles 17:12-14 and 2 Chronicles 13:5 speak of the eternity of this gift to the Davidic family.[41] In spite of the evident preoccupation of the work with cultic matters (and the king's responsibility toward these), the impression remains that the Davidic covenant in its personal focus continues to be a matter of concern to the Chronicler. This is the point of departure for the 'royalist' interpretation of the covenant.

IV. 'Royalist' Expectation in Chronicles; Some Concluding Reflections

The most important representative of this viewpoint is Williamson, the main lines of whose influential discussions have been adumbrated above.[42]

Williamson believes that the Chronicler wished to harmonize the perceived tension in his *Vorlage* between the unconditional way in which the dynastic promise was presented in 2 Samuel 7:15-16 and later passages which make (or at least appear to make) the promise depend on the Davidides being obedient to God's commandments (*cf.* 1 Ki. 2:4; 8:25; 9:6-9). To resolve this tension, the Chronicler focused both the promise *and* the conditions upon Solomon, thus giving him an equal share with David in the confirmation of the covenant. Solomon's part was seen as entailing a two-fold obligation, to complete the temple and to be unswervingly obedient to Yahweh's commandments and statutes throughout his reign (*cf.* 1 Ch. 28:7; 2 Ch. 7:17-18). The form of the Solomonic narrative (omitting 1 Ki. 11) is said to demonstrate that Solomon was obedient in both respects and to imply that the dynastic promise was irrevocably established upon the death of this obedient king. Three texts in the post-Solomonic narrative indicate that the Chronicler understands the dynastic promise to be confirmed and of eternal validity, whatever the vicissitudes of Judah or the personal worthiness of individual Davidides. In 2 Chronicles 13:5 Abijah affirms the perpetual validity of the covenant (בְּרִית מֶלַח) in the face of the military threat. In 2 Chronicles 21:7 the covenant is invoked as the reason for Jehoram's preservation from fratricide. Finally, the high priest Jehoiada alludes to the dynastic promise in 2 Chronicles

[41]Riley's discussion of passages traditionally given a 'messianic' or 'royalist' interpretation (171-75) does not engage sufficiently with the import of these verses.
[42]See particularly Williamson, 'Eschatology'; *idem*, 'Dynastic Oracle'.

23:3, in his overthrow of the usurper Athaliah. Neither Jehoram nor Joash, for whom Jehoiada acts, is judged positively by the Chronicler, but both kings owe their standing to the divine promise.

While some details of this interpretation may be queried,[43] Williamson does present a strong case for identifying a continuing 'royalist' expectation in Chronicles. The perdurance of the Davidic line into the post-exilic period (1 Ch. 3:17-24) would no doubt have been seen as confirming that God's promise to David remained effective in the writer's own day.

Having granted all this, we must still ask: did the Chronicler seriously anticipate a Davidic restoration in his day in terms similar to the pre-exilic kingdom, or is his thought moving along different lines? Riley's monograph aside, other recent studies of the Chronicler's theology have arrived at something of an impasse on this question.[44] We rightly hesitate to speak of anything as developed as a 'messianic expectation' in the work—the features traditionally invoked in that sense do not support such an interpretation—but may we not detect in the book a restrained and implicit form of this, the germ of later developments? This suggestion arises from two closely related features of the writer's presentation: his strong insistence on the 'eternity' of the promise of kingship (on Yahweh's behalf) to David's descendants,[45] notwithstanding the demise of the monarchy more than two centuries earlier; and his own highly specific view that Yahweh's (eternal) king-

[43]It creates a tension between what the Chronicler is said to be depicting of Solomon (an obedient reign from start to finish) and what he knows to be the case about him (*cf.* 2 Ch. 9:29; 10:4, 10-11, 14-15). The author is not really concerned in 2 Ch. 1-9 to present 'Solomonic apologetic' (*contra* R.L. Braun, 'Solomonic Apologetic in Chronicles', *JBL* 92 [1973] 503-16) for the primary interest of these chapters is the temple, and the covenant and divine kingdom to which it testifies. Solomon's obedience is concentrated chiefly in temple building, as 1 Ch. 28:9b-10 implies. The conditional aspects of the covenant in 1 Ch. 28:7 do not override the unconditional way in which Solomon's election and the dynastic promise are presented in 1 Ch. 17:13-14. Solomon was obedient in the primary matter of establishing the cult, and thus his reign, although marked by sin and inconsistency, signified a complete break with the experience of Saul (*cf.* 1 Ch. 17:13). It appears also that the dynastic promise was established *within* Solomon's lifetime, at the completion of the temple. The fire-theophany on the altar of burnt offerings at the conclusion of the temple dedication prayer (2 Ch. 7:1) is best understood as the divine answer to Solomon's plea that the dynastic promise (חַסְדֵי דָּוִיד) be ratified (2 Ch. 6:42). The miracle signifies that just as Solomon has completed Yahweh's 'house', the temple, so too has Yahweh granted Solomon's prayer and affirmed David's 'house', the dynastic line (*cf.* 1 Ch. 17:10, 12).

[44]*Cf.* Oeming, *Das Wahre Israel*, 209; Strübind, *Tradition als Interpretation*, 201.

[45]1 Ch. 17:12, 14, 27; 22:10; 28:4, 7; 2 Ch. 13:5; 21:7; *cf.* 2 Ch. 9:8.

dom is still expressed in *the personal line of David's descendants*, and is not simply absorbed in the temple and cult.[46] While the focus is on the *present* manifestation of Yahweh's kingdom, mediated through the Davidic covenant, this association introduces a new and potentially transcendent element into the tradition. It may be that this fact relativises the older political significance of the dynasty for the Chronicler, at the same time as giving rise to hopes of salvation focused on David's line. The writer does not develop this thought, for he is too much concerned to focus on the present state of his community, and to stress its continuity with the formative events of the pre-exilic past. Preeminently this means the Davidic covenant, which remains the basis of Israel's existence and its hope of restoration (*cf.* 2 Ch. 7:12-22). Nevertheless, it is a remarkable feature of the Chronicler's presentation that he introduced a connection which, centuries later in its own way, is central to New Testament christology, God's kingdom present through the Son of David. Is the association accidental, or was there a trajectory from the work which itself concludes the Hebrew Bible in its canonical order?[47]

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[46]1 Ch. 17:14; 28:5; 29:23; 2 Ch. 9:8; 13:5. On the eternity of Yahweh's kingdom, *cf.* 1 Ch. 16:31; 29:11-12; 2 Ch. 20:6.
[47]A fact reflected in Mt. 23:35; Lk. 11:51; *cf.* 2 Ch. 24:20ff.

CHAPTER 13

MESSIANIC THEMES IN ZECHARIAH 9-14

Iain Duguid

Summary

The book of Zechariah looks forward to the coming of the Messiah in terms borrowed and developed from earlier scriptural material. Its imagery was then further picked up and developed by the New Testament writers to affirm their conviction that these prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus. This article examines the prominent messianic themes in Zechariah 9-14 (the coming king, the good shepherd, the pierced Messiah), looking at how the prophet interacts with earlier Scriptures, and briefly exploring how these themes are taken up and reused in the New Testament.

I. Introduction

It is a recognisable feature of post-exilic prophecy that it does not stand alone but interacts extensively with other Scriptural material. This is not due to a lack of creativity on the part of the later prophets. Far from it; they were, in fact, often extremely creative in the reuse of earlier materials, sometimes transforming the literary genre of the original,[1] or reinterpreting earlier oracles to apply in a new way to the new situation. However, their creativity apparently operated largely within the boundaries of existing materials. These materials were recognized by them as authoritative yet also open to development and reapplication to new situations. Prophecy was not yet at an end.

This feature of post-exilic prophecy is very evident in Zechariah 9-14.[2] The oracles repeatedly refer back to already existing materials, with which they assume the reader's familiarity, and then proceed to develop them as the basis for new prophecies. The process is not dissimilar to the way in which Chronicles reuses earlier historical materials in a creative fashion.[3] In this study, we shall examine the prominent messianic themes in Zechariah 9-14, looking at how the prophet interacts with earlier Scriptures, and briefly explore how these themes are taken up and reused in the New Testament.

II. The Coming King

Perhaps the best known passage in Zechariah 9-14 is the promise of the coming king in Zechariah 9:9, 10, where Zion is instructed to rejoice and Jerusalem to shout, because her king is coming to her riding on a donkey. The greatness expected for this coming king is one of world domination, as may be seen in the last two lines of v.10: 'His dominion will be from sea to sea, from the River to the ends of the earth.' This aspiration may originally have belonged to the royal enthronement ritual.[4] The formula is found in almost identical terms in Psalm 72:8, a

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[1]*E.g.*, from blessings and curses into oracles, or from oracles into law. On this, see M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: OUP, 1985) 500-505.
[2]C.L. Meyers & E.M. Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1994) 35-45.
[3]For Zc. 9-14, the reuse of earlier materials is extensively documented in K. Larkin, *The Eschatology of Second Zechariah. A Study of the Formation of a Mantological Wisdom Anthology* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994).
[4]W. Rudolph, *Haggai, Sacharja 1-8, Sacharja 9-14, Maleachi* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1976) 182.

Psalm which has several key terms in common with Zechariah 9:9-10.[5] Both look forward to a reign which encompasses the entire known world, and both share the desire for a king who reigns in righteousness (Zc. 9:9; Ps. 72:3), and who is the channel of God's salvation (Zc. 9:9; Ps. 72:4).

Yet the contrast between the expectation of the two passages is as pronounced as the similarity. In Psalm 72, the active party in bringing about the expected blessing is the Davidic king. While the psalm is addressed to God, his part in the process is envisaged as providing the righteous king, who will have the characteristics to bring about blessedness for his people. In contrast, in Zechariah 9 it is the Lord alone who is the active party, bringing about the state of world domination single-handedly.[6] He is the one who will crush the opposition from surrounding countries (Zc. 9:1-7) and he will himself encamp around his house as a guard (Zc. 9:8).[7] The Lord will cut off the chariot and the war bow (Zc. 9:10). The coming king is given no role in establishing world dominion in Zechariah. He merely provides the focus for rejoicing, as he heads the triumphal procession into Jerusalem and speaks peace to the nations whose warlike spirit has already been shattered. Whereas in Psalm 72:13 the Davidic king 'saves' (יוֹשִׁיעַ) the lives of the needy, in Zechariah 9:9 he is himself the object of the Lord's salvation.[8]

A similar transformation has been wrought in the other tradition which Zechariah has utilized, Genesis 49:10, 11. In Genesis 49, a ruler is expected to come from Judah, 'binding his foal (עִירֹה) to the vine and his ass's colt (בְּנִי אֲתֹנוֹ) to the choice vine.' This is clearly a similar figure to Zechariah's coming king whose mount is described as 'an ass, the foal of an ass' (עַיִר בֶּן־אֲתֹנוֹת). Yet again the differences are as striking as the similarities: the figure in Genesis comes from the warlike tribe of Judah, and is described as having 'his hand on the neck of his enemies' (Gn. 49:8), like a lion crouching over his prey (Gn. 49:8).

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[5]Larkin, *Eschatology*, 75.

[6]A. Laato, *Josiah and David redivivus: the Historical Josiah and the Messianic Expectations of Exilic and Postexilic Times*, (CBOT 33; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992) 270.

[7]Reading מִצָּבָה in place of מַצָּבָה, with LXX and Syr. See BHS and Rudolph, *Haggai, Sacharja, Maleachi*, 169.

[8]Understanding נוֹשָׁע to have a passive force. The unqualified English translation 'victorious' (NRSV) is too triumphalist: the focus of the Niphal of ישׁע is on victory gained through the intervention of another, whether a great army (Ps. 33:16) or, more frequently, the Lord (*e.g.*, Nu. 10:9; Dt. 33:29; 2 Sa. 22:4; Is. 45:22; Je. 30:7). This is best rendered in English by the passive 'saved' or 'delivered'.

In this context, it seems possible that 'washing his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes' (Gn. 49:11) has something more in mind than simply abundant fruitfulness.[9] Clothing stained red with the blood (דָּם) of grapes is evocative of an altogether different kind of activity, of outright warfare (*cf.* Ps. 58:10 [11]; 68:23 [24]). The two images of harvest and judgement, of winepress and blood, are completely merged in Revelation 14:20, while the figure riding to war on a white horse in Revelation 19:13 wears a garment 'dipped in blood'.[10]

Zechariah's king, however, is described as 'meek' (עָנִי) and speaking peace (שָׁלוֹם) to the nations. The warlike language is still present in Zechariah 9 but it has been transferred from the royal figure to the Lord himself.[11] The donkey, too, is not an animal of war in Zechariah. It is certainly an animal suitable for a king to ride (*cf.* 1 Ki. 1:33), but there does seem to be a contrast drawn in parts of the Old Testament between a concept of kingship based on power and despotism, represented by horses and chariots, and one based on dependence upon the Lord, symbolized by the king riding on a donkey.[12] The coming king of Zechariah 9 will fall into the latter category.

Thus the coming king in Zechariah, while a figure of greatness and ceremonial importance, does not himself bring about the blessedness of his people through warlike activities. The key actions will come from the Lord, who will deliver the kingdom to the human king as a *fait accompli*. The king's part involves humble dependence upon the Lord. This emphasis is perhaps natural in a 'day of small things' (Zc. 4:10), such as God's people experienced during the exile and subsequent years. When the people are all too aware of their own weakness, then the words 'Not by might, not by power but by my Spirit says the Lord of Hosts' (Zc. 4:6) are both necessary and welcome.[13]

This emphasis is by no means unique to Zechariah. In Ezekiel 34, for instance, the prophet speaks of the Lord's intervention to rescue

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[9]The comment of G. von Rad, *Genesis* (3rd ed; London: SCM, 1972) 425, is typical: 'Anyone… who can wash his garment in wine, lives in paradisaical abundance.' Similarly C. Westermann, *Genesis* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1982) 263.

[10]This figure appears to be another creative reworking of Gn. 49:11: so *e.g.*, J.P.M. Sweet, *Revelation* (London: Pelican, 1979) 283.

[11]The same oracle of Gn. 49:10 was transformed by Ezekiel into a message of judgement (Ezk. 21:27 [32]). According to Larkin, this could have led to Zechariah wishing to reinstate the ancient promise in an eschatological context (*Eschatology*, 72). Certainly Zechariah's future king, described as righteous (צַדִּיק) and saved (נוֹשָׁע), provides a foil for Ezekiel's 'unhallowed, wicked prince' (Ezk. 21:25 [Heb. v. 30]).

[12]*Cf.* Ps. 20:7-9 [Heb. vv. 8-10]. So Laato, *Josiah*, 271.

his sheep. He will search for them (v. 11), rescue them (v. 12), gather them (v. 13), feed them (v. 14) and judge them (v. 17). In short, the Lord himself will be the shepherd of his sheep (Ezk. 34:15). However, his shepherding of the people also includes the provision of a Davidic king: 'I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David' (Ezk. 34:23). We have here precisely the same combination of circumstances as in Zechariah: God will himself act decisively to bring in the state of blessedness, and will then set up the king of his own choosing over his people—a king who is a new David (in the picture of Ezekiel), or the promised scion of Judah (in the picture of Zechariah).

III. The Good Shepherd

Like the image of the coming king, the picture of the good shepherd is not one invented by Zechariah. In the ancient Near East, the choice of 'shepherd' as a metaphor for kings was a natural one,[14] and it is frequently found in the Old Testament in that sense.[15] The term 'shepherds' in the plural can also refer to kings (*e.g.*, Je. 23; Ezk. 34), though there are some passages in the Old Testament where the term seems to take on a wider connotation, indicating a broader spectrum of leadership than just the monarch (*e.g.*, Je. 25:34-36).[16] Invariably in the Old Testament, however, shepherd denotes either God himself or some kind of earthly ruler, though not necessarily a king.

Shepherd imagery abounds in Zechariah 9-14. As well as being central to the extended prophetic sign-act of shepherding in 11:4-17, and the oracle against the shepherd in 13:7-9, the shepherds are marked out for judgement in 10:3 and 11:3. The question is, however, who does Zechariah have in mind when he speaks of 'shepherds'? Some recent studies have identified the shepherd of Zechariah

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[13]In Zc. 1-8 the stress is on God's presence creating the conditions necessary for the rebuilding of the Temple: see J.A. Hartle, 'The Literary Unity of Zechariah', *JETS* 35 (1992) 150. In Zc. 9-14 the Temple is no longer the focus of interest, perhaps because it has been rebuilt by this time. However, the stress on the priority of divine action remains.

[14]So Hammurabi describes himself as 'The shepherd who brings salvation and whose staff is righteous' and Merodach-baladan II is called 'the shepherd who gathers together again those who have strayed.' See L. Dürr, *Ursprung und Ausbau der israelitisch-jüdischen Heilandserwartung; ein Beitrag zur Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Berlin: Schwetschke, 1925) 118-19.

[15]For example 1 Ki. 22:17; Is. 44:28.

[16]See I.M. Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel* (SVT 56; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 39, 40.

11 as a prophetic figure, rather than a ruler.[17] Reference is often made to Isaiah 63:11, where Moses is apparently called the 'shepherd of his flock'. Yet Moses is in view there undoubtedly as leader rather than prophet. So this reinforces rather than weakens the argument that shepherd in the Old Testament invariably represents either God himself or an earthly leader.[18]

Even though they favour identifying the shepherds of Zechariah 11 as prophetic figures (but not those of Zc. 10:3, 11:3 and 13:7-9!), Meyers and Meyers are forced to admit that 'the identification of the prophet here with the role of shepherd is perhaps unique in the Hebrew Bible.'[19] That should, at the very least, require us to be cautious in adopting such an identification, which not only goes against the universal evidence of the rest of the Hebrew Bible but of what we know of the usage of the image in the rest of the ancient Near East. It is, in fact, perfectly possible to retain the traditional leadership connotations of 'shepherd' in Zechariah 11, as we shall see.[20]

The shepherd motif is first introduced in Zechariah 10:2 where the people are described as wandering like lost sheep, 'afflicted for want of a shepherd'. It is made clear in the following verse, however, that this state of wandering is not due to the total absence of shepherds but the absence of a *good* shepherd. The existing shepherds are the object of God's wrath: 'My anger is hot against the shepherds (הָרֹעִים), and I will punish the he-goats (הָעַתּוּדִים)' (Zc. 10:3). A link is already suggested with Ezekiel 34, which condemns first the shepherds (vv. 1-16) and then the rams and he-goats (vv. 17-24). These two groups seem to represent different levels of leadership.[21] The shepherds have official control over the flock, while the he-goats provide the leadership from within the flock, as may be seen from Jeremiah's call for the faithful to 'be as he-goats before the flock', and lead the exodus out of

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[17]Thus Larkin states 'Possibly, therefore, the prophet in Zech 11:4-14 is reflecting on the experience of what it means to be a prophet' (*Eschatology*, 116). Similarly Meyers & Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 250; G. Wallis, 'Pastor bonus: Eine Betrachtung zu den Hirtenstücken des Deutero- und Trito-Sacharja Buches', *Kairos* 12 (1970) 223-36.

[18]Though not necessarily a king (*cf.* 2 Sa. 7:7). B. Otzen recognises that the figure of shepherd in the Old Testament can represent either God or 'den König oder Führer des Volkes' but in his subsequent exposition seems to ignore the possibility of a non-royal 'Führer'; *Studien über Deuterosacharja* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1964) 150.

[19]Meyers & Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 250.

[20]Laato, *Josiah*, 278-79.

[21]Meyers & Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 196.

Babylon (Je. 50:8).[22] Here, then, the prophet seems to be addressing a message of judgement to all levels of leadership, both 'the shepherds' and 'the he-goats', exactly as in Ezekiel 34.

The answer to the problem of bad shepherds found in Ezekiel 34 is two-fold: first, God himself will act as the shepherd of his people (Ezk. 34:11-16), and second, God will provide for his people a good shepherd (Ezk. 34:23, 24). Exactly the same pattern may be discerned in Zechariah 10:3-4. In addition to punishing the bad shepherds, the Lord himself will 'care for his flock' (Zc. 10:3) and from him will come a cornerstone, a tent peg, a battle bow, indeed every ruler (Zc. 10:4). This latter point is missed by most translations and commentators, who take 'the house of Judah' as the antecedent of מִמֶּנּוּ, and thus translate 'from them' rather than 'from him'.[23] In that case, the point would be a promise that the ruler to come would be from the house of Judah. However, while that translation is grammatically possible and fits other passages such as Genesis 49:8-12 and Jeremiah 30:21, the possibility that the singular is a collective for the house of Judah is here made less likely by the fact that in the last clause of Zechariah 10:3 the house of Judah are referred to in the plural as 'them' (אֹתָם). In addition, in a passage where the stress is so strongly on God's activity, it makes much better sense to see 'the Lord of Hosts' as the proper antecedent.[24] In this case, the promise is that the Lord will provide new leadership for his people, described metaphorically as 'a cornerstone, a tent peg, a battle bow'.

The cornerstone (פִּנָּה) recalls Isaiah 28:16, where God declares 'Behold I am laying in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation', and Psalm 118:22: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the head of the corner'. Further, tent peg (יָתֵד) recalls Isaiah 22:20-23, where Eliakim is given an authoritative role over Jerusalem and Judah and described as 'a tent peg (יָתֵד) fastened in a sure place'. The Lord promises to 'place on his shoulder the key of the House of David'. Neither the tent peg nor the cornerstone image is exclusively royal, but both have strong royal

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[22]J.G.S.S. Thomson, 'The Shepherd-Ruler Concept in the Old Testament and its Application in the New Testament', *SJT* 8 (1955) 410.

[23]So *e.g.*, RSV, NIV; Otzen, *Deuterosacharja*, 142-43; H.G. Mitchell, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and Jonah* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912) 289; Meyers & Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 199.

[24]So B. Stade, 'Deuterozacharja. Eine kritische Studie', *ZAW* 1 (1881) 21; K. Elliger, *Das Buch der zwölf kleinen Propheten* (8th ed; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985) 156.

associations.[25] These associations led the Targum to translate 'corner-stone' and 'tent peg' as 'king' and 'messiah' respectively.

The royal theme is underlined by mention of the 'battle bow' (קֶשֶׁת מִלְחָמָה). This is not an image of an individual, like the corner-stone and tent peg, but represents power, especially military power.[26] It connects back to Zechariah 9:10, where the battle bow is mentioned as being cut off by God in the wake of his provision of the eschatological king. In addition to providing a new royal leader, God will also deal with the second tier of leadership, by providing 'every overseer' (כָל־נוֹגֵשׂ). The class of 'overseers', who have so often become 'oppressors' (*cf.* Zc. 9:8), will be replaced by men after God's own heart. Though the description of the principal new leader as a royal figure, a new David, is less explicit than in Ezekiel 34, the essential stress of this passage is still the same two-fold intervention of God which is promised in the former passage. The Lord will himself act as Israel's shepherd and transform Israel's leadership from top to bottom.

The critique of Israel's shepherds is taken up again in the shepherd allegory of Zechariah 11:4-17. Here the prophet is instructed to act as shepherd to a particular flock, described as 'the flock doomed to slaughter'. The implements with which he is to shepherd the flock are the staffs 'grace' and 'union'. This he does, removing three other shepherds in the process.[27] One might have expected a happy outcome at this point, but it is not to be. The shepherd's patience with his flock is exhausted and they also detest him. The shepherd resigns his post, receives his derisory wages,[28] and leaves the flock to the tender mercies of a worthless shepherd.

To understand the meaning of the allegory it is necessary to see that it is a complete reversal of Ezekiel's prophecy:[29] whereas in Ezekiel 34, God had promised to be Israel's shepherd, to judge the bad

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[25]Meyers & Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 200-201. Otzen, *Deuterosacharja*, 144. See also Ezr. 9:8-9, which may have been influenced by Zc. 10:4.

[26]Meyers & Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 202.

[27]Many historical identifications have been attempted for the three shepherds who were removed. The wide range of the suggestions and complete lack of agreement suggest that perhaps the figure 'three' is intended as a symbol of completeness, rather than literally. See Meyers & Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 265; A. Caquot, 'Brèves remarques sur l'allégorie des pasteurs en Zacharie 11' in A. Caquot, S. Legasse and M. Tardieu (eds.), *Mélanges Bibliques et Orientaux en l'honneur de M. Mathias Delcor*, (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1985).

[28]E. Lipinski, 'Recherches sur le livre de Zacharie', *VT* 20 (1970) 53-55; Laato, *Josiah*, 284.

[29]P.D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 344-45.

shepherds, to care for his flock personally and to provide a good shepherd for them, a new David,[30] in Zechariah 11 God represents himself as saying to the people that he will no longer be their shepherd, nor will he care for them (Zc. 11:9; *cf.* Zc. 11:6) and in place of the promised good shepherd will come a worthless shepherd (Zc. 11:15-16).[31] Further, whereas in Ezekiel 37 the prophet took two sticks and joined them together symbolizing the reunion of Israel and Judah under the shepherd king, 'my servant David' (Ezk. 37:15-24), in Zechariah 11 the staff labelled 'Union' is broken in two by the shepherd himself, annulling the brotherhood between Judah and Israel (Zc. 11:14). In place of 'my servant David' (Ezk. 37:24), God will give the people an uncaring shepherd (Zc. 11:16).

This background indicates clearly whom the shepherd represents: as so often in the Old Testament the shepherd represents both God and *also* the earthly ruler as God's representative or 'under-shepherd'. This collocation of ideas is found clearly in Ezekiel 34: God will be Israel's shepherd (Ezk. 34:11-16) and he will provide for them an earthly shepherd (Ezk. 34:23). So in Zechariah 11, the shepherd's action of abandoning the flock to its fate (v. 9) simply mirrors the Lord's decision not to pity the inhabitants of the land (v. 6). In breaking the staff 'grace', and the covenant which it represents, the shepherd also represents the Lord.[32] The Lord will not shepherd his people, instead abandoning them to the fate which they so richly deserve (vv. 8-9). But just as part of God's 'shepherding' of his people involved removal of bad shepherds (Ezk 34:7-10; Je. 23:1-2; Zc. 11:8) and provision of a good shepherd (Ezk. 37:24; Je. 23:4-5), part of that 'not shepherding' involves raising up an earthly 'antishepherd' to rule his people (Zc. 11:15-16), whose actions are the exact opposite of the good shepherd in Ezekiel 34.[33]

But after the nadir of v. 16, another change in the fortunes of God's people is announced. The last word is not judgement upon God's people but woe to the worthless shepherd (v. 17), which brings

[30]Very similar themes are expressed in Je. 23:1-5.
[31]A.S. van der Woude, 'Die Hirtenallegorie von Sacharja XI', *JNSL* 12 (1984) 149.
[32]On this Larkin comments: 'Here is a verse in which the "I" of God and the "I" of the prophet are almost inextricable' (*Eschatology*, 128).
[33]With regard to v.16 Meyers & Meyers observe that 'these [six] clauses, which list a series of despicable deeds on the part of the foolish shepherd... in tone and style... are strikingly similar to the six clauses in Ezek. 34:16 that describe the ultimate purpose of the good shepherd' (*Zechariah 9-14*, 285). For the term 'antishepherd', see S.L. Cook, 'The Metamorphosis of a Shepherd: The Tradition History of Zechariah 11:17 + 13:7-9', *CBQ* 55 (1993) 459.

with it at least the hope that a return to the promises of Ezekiel 34 and Jeremiah 23 is possible.[34] God will give his people over to the bad shepherd because they have wearied the patience of the good shepherd and have detested him. But the abandonment is not total or final, for the sword will come on the bad shepherd as well.

The prophet returns to the theme of shepherds in Zechariah 13:7-9. This oracle speaks again of a sword coming against a shepherd. But this time the shepherd who will be struck is not a bad shepherd but a good shepherd;[35] his loss will result in the scattering of the flock and a time of trial and testing for God's people. The symbol of water for purification (Zc. 13:1) is replaced by the sword and fire,[36] and the process of judgement begins with the shepherd. It does not end there, however. Many will perish during that time, but those who survive will emerge refined and purified, the true people of God.

To sum up, then, the shepherd imagery of Zechariah 9-14 builds on the ideas of Ezekiel 34 and 37 and develops them in a new direction. Ezekiel 34 had promised that God would judge the shepherds and he-goats (Ezk. 34:1-10, 17-22), the leaders of society at all levels who had sought their own interests rather than the interests of the flock. Ezekiel prophesied that God himself would be the shepherd of his people (Ezk. 34:11-16) and provide a new, good shepherd, a new David (Ezk. 34:23-24), whose coming would usher in the blessing of reunion between Israel and Judah (Ezk. 37:21-24). Zechariah affirms the same themes up to the point of the coming of the good shepherd (Zc. 10:3-4). But at that point a new note is added. The coming of the good shepherd will not immediately usher in peace and prosperity, for the sheep will despise him and rebel against him and wear out his patience with them (Zc. 11:8). In his place, God will give them what they deserve: another worthless shepherd (Zc. 11:15). However, the message is not totally one of despair because the end of the shepherd-allegory is a return to the beginning: a message of woe to the worthless shepherd (Zc. 11:17-19). This leaves open the possibility of a new start to the cycle of judgement and blessing, with the positive outcome expressed by Ezekiel once more a possibility. Blessing is not automatic, however: a repetition of the negative outcome expressed in Zechariah 11 is also possible. Entry into the blessed future is conditional upon the obedience of God's people and their submission to the

[34]Rudolph, *Haggai, Sacharja, Maleachi*, 211; Meyers & Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 304.
[35]Larkin, *Eschatology*, 177; Laato, *Josiah*, 287.
[36]Cook, 'Metamorphosis', 461.

good shepherd, while disobedience leads equally to tribulation. In the language of Zechariah 1, the people must return to the Lord, turning away from their evil ways, if they are to avoid repeating the disastrous experiences of their forefathers (Zc. 1:1-6).

Zechariah 13:7-9 expresses related ideas: the way to blessing for God's people leads first through tribulation. The coming shepherd, described as rejected in Zechariah 11, is here described as afflicted, struck down by the Lord's own sword.[37] But God's ultimate purpose in all of this is the purification and blessing of his people. The end result will be a renewed covenant relationship between the Lord and his people (Zc. 13:9; *cf.* Ezk. 37:23).

IV. The Pierced Messiah

In Zechariah 13:7-9, we saw the theme of the afflicted Messiah expressed in terms of the shepherd image. A similar theme emerges in Zechariah 12:10:

> I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a Spirit of compassion and supplication, so that, when they look on the one whom they have pierced,[38] they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly for him, as one weeps over a first-born.

This rather enigmatic verse has given rise to many interpretations of who the one is that has been pierced. Larkin has noted the kingly and divine overtones of the language used here,[39] which suggests that he is a royal figure. The comparison of the mourning with that at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo invites comparison with the death of Josiah, who was similarly mourned by 'all Judah and Jerusalem' after he died, pierced by an arrow at Megiddo (2 Ch. 35:24).[40] But again the differences are as real as the similarities: the mysterious pierced one in Zechariah 12 was apparently pierced by the Jerusalemites themselves, not by Pharaoh, and the mourning for him is not simply ordinary grief but is triggered by the activity of the Lord in pouring out a spirit of

[37]*Cf.* Is. 53:10.
[38]Literally, the MT reads 'they shall look to me, whom they have pierced'. On this, see Larkin, *Eschatology*, 149.
[39]*Eschatology*, 162-64. *Cf.* Otzen, *Deuterosacharja*, 177-78.
[40]Rudolph, *Haggai, Sacharja, Maleachi*, 224; Meyers & Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 344; Laato, *Josiah*, 291.

grace and supplication.

Meyers and Meyers suggest that there is not necessarily a reference intended to a specific historical event here, but rather that the 'pierced one' represents the true prophets of the past, whose suffering often included physical danger and sometimes death (*cf.* Je. 26:7, 11, 15, 16, 18, 20-23).[41] Now, however, the tension between the true and false prophets will be resolved: those who attempted to thwart true prophecy in the past will feel remorseful, while any future false prophet will be cut down ('pierced') by his own parents (Zc. 13:3).[42]

While this undoubtedly has the virtue of seeking to relate the passage to its wider context and avoiding speculative historical identifications, one wonders if it does justice to the royal overtones of the figure in Zechariah 12:10. If a prophet is intended (or the prophets as a whole) it is hard to see why the imagery should have been influenced by the events surrounding the death of Josiah. It would be more natural for that event to be seen as in some sense 'typological' of the death of a similar, royal figure. Further, accepting that דקר usually means a stab wound inflicted by a sword,[43] is it not better to identify the pierced one of Zechariah 12:10 with the shepherd of Zechariah 13:7-9, against whom God's sword is coming? The death of that royal figure, which clearly has tragic consequences for the flock (Zc. 13:7), seems an appropriate cause for the intense mourning of the whole community, mourning as intense as that which followed the tragic death of Josiah at Megiddo. But the death of this eschatological shepherd, devastating though it may seem at the time, will ultimately have good consequences, by opening up a fountain of cleansing (Zc. 13:1). At a stroke, the iniquity of the land will be dealt with (*cf.* Zc. 2:9). The imagery of water is replaced by the refiner's fire in Zechariah 13:9 but the outcome is the same: a purified people who call upon the Lord.

V. The Messianic Themes of Zechariah 9-14 in the New Testament

We have seen above how Zechariah's prophecies frequently picked up earlier material and adapted and reused it. Similarly, his own words have been taken up and adapted by the New Testament writers, who saw them as being fulfilled in Jesus.

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[41]Meyers & Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 339.
[42]Meyers & Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 340.
[43]Meyers & Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 340

Each of the evangelists records the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem upon a colt.[44] Matthew and John explicitly relate it to Zechariah 9:9, showing that it is a deliberate claim to kingship. Jesus is the humble king[45] promised by Zechariah: he comes not for judgement,[46] but to speak peace to the nations.[47] But Jesus overflows the categories of Zechariah 9:9. For the king was described there as 'saved', while Jesus is the one to whom the crowd come shouting 'Hosanna!' ('Save now!'). Jesus is both the model of complete dependence upon God (*e.g.* Mt. 26:39), *and* the Lord who acts to bring salvation. Thus, the first action of Jesus on entering Jerusalem (according to Matthew, Mark and Luke) was to go into the Temple and drive out the merchants and moneychangers. This is hardly the peaceful image of the king on the donkey. Yet this too reflects back to Zechariah's prophecies, for in Zechariah 9:8 the Lord declares:

> Then I will encamp at my house as a guard,
> so that none shall march to and fro;
> no oppressor shall again overrun them,
> for now I see with my own eyes.

So Jesus enters Jerusalem fulfilling not only Zechariah 9:9 but Zechariah 9:8 as well: he cleanses God's house—ironically not by driving out the oppressive Romans but by evicting the home-grown merchants.[48] Jesus takes the part not simply of the earthly king but of the Lord himself.

Another passage which reflects something of the imagery of Zechariah 9:9[49]—but again with significant reversals —is Revelation 19:11-16. There we are shown the King of kings and Lord of lords,

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[44]Mt. 21:1-11; Mk. 11:1-11; Lk. 19:29-44; Jn. 12:12-19.

[45]Note Jesus' comments on greatness in God's kingdom just a few verses earlier in Matthew's account (Mt. 20:25-28).

[46]But see below on the cleansing of the Temple.

[47]There may be a hint of this behind Eph. 2:17: 'He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.'

[48]John's account of the cleansing of the Temple, while placed at a different point of Jesus' ministry, makes another connection between that event and Zechariah. It records Jesus' words: 'You shall not make my Father's house a house of trade' (Jn. 2:16), which seem to echo Zc. 14:21: 'There shall no longer be a trader in the house of the Lord on that day.' *Cf.* C. Roth, 'The Cleansing of the Temple and Zechariah 14:21', *NT* 4 (1960) 175; E. Haenchen, *Das Johannesevangelium*, (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1980) 201.

[49]Also in view, even more strongly, is Gn. 49:11-12. On the relationship of that passage to Zc. 9:9-10, see above.

seated not on a donkey but on a white horse. He comes not for salvation and to speak peace but for judgement and to make war. No longer is he humbly garbed, but rather crowned with many crowns. The king is coming, but this time for war!

Not only is Jesus represented as the coming king, he also speaks of himself as the good shepherd (Jn. 10:1-18). There have been other shepherds in the past, bad shepherds, hirelings who cared nothing for the sheep (Jn. 10:12). They deserted them when danger threatened (*cf.* Zc. 11:17) with the result that the sheep have been scattered. The good shepherd, however, lays down his life for the sheep. He will be struck down by God and the sheep will be scattered (Mt. 26:31; Mk. 14:27 *cf.* Zc. 13:7). But again the differences between the good shepherd of the New Testament and the good shepherd of Zechariah are striking. Jesus' flock do not detest their shepherd; far from it, they know his voice and follow him (Jn. 10:4). Judas, however, fulfils the role of the 'traffickers in the sheep': he values the good shepherd's ministry at thirty pieces of silver (Mt. 26:15; *cf.* Zc. 11:11,12), and when he regrets his action he takes the money and casts it into the Temple (Mt. 27:3-10).[50] Meanwhile, the good shepherd has other sheep to bring in, so that there may be one flock, one shepherd (Jn. 10:16). This points to a reaffirmation of the positive expectation of Ezekiel 34, rather than the negative outlook of Zechariah 11. The result of Jesus' shepherding is abundant life (Jn. 10:10) and unity (Jn. 10:16): the staffs which Zechariah shattered ('grace' and 'union') are restored in Jesus.

The way in which that reversal takes place is, as Zechariah prophesied, through the sword of Judgement falling on the Good Shepherd (*cf.* Zc. 13:7-9). The shepherd becomes himself the sacrificial sheep.[51] The shepherd is struck and the sheep are scattered (Mt. 26:31; Zc. 13:7). But he is not simply the passive object of God's judgement. He himself lays down his life, and he has power to take it up again (Jn. 13:17-18). Because of that resurrection, his followers can rejoice, even as they go through the refiner's fire of trials (1 Pet. 1:3-7; Zc. 13:9).

Finally, John represents Jesus as the pierced Messiah. In John

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[50]Interestingly, Matthew's account seems to combine two possible renderings of Zc. 11:13. In Zc. 11, it is disputed whether the prophet throws the money into the 'treasury' (אֹצָר) of the Temple or to a 'potter' (יֹצֵר) working in the Temple. Matthew tells us that the chief priests felt unable to put it into the treasury and so purchased with it the potter's field as a place of burial. *Cf.* F.F. Bruce, 'The Book of Zechariah and the Passion Narrative', *BJRL* 43 (1960-61) 347.

[51]K. Nielsen, 'Shepherd, Lamb and Blood. Imagery in the Old Testament - Use and Re-use', *Studia Theologica* 46 (1992) 131.

19:37, he quotes Zechariah 12:10 as being fulfilled in the death of Jesus when the Roman soldier pierced his side with a spear and blood and water flowed out. The flow of water and blood are often referred to as being medical evidence that Jesus was really dead.[52] However, it seems unlikely that this was what John had in mind. Rather, he regarded the water and the blood as scriptural evidence that Jesus was really the promised Messiah.[53] Water and blood are the twin symbols of cleansing in the Old Testament; thus when Jesus was pierced on the cross, John saw the fountain (מָקוֹר) for cleansing promised in Zechariah 13:1 flowing out from his side.[54] מָקוֹר can describe either a flow of (menstrual) blood (Lv. 12:7; 20:18) or (more frequently) a flow of water (*e.g.* Je. 2:13). But whereas the blood which flows from the 'fountain' described in Leviticus makes unclean, the flow of Jesus' blood makes clean as God through his Spirit brings about mourning and repentance. The annually repeated mourning for Josiah which brought no relief is replaced by redemptive mourning for the death of a victim pierced once for all, never to be struck again.

According to the Book of Revelation, those who do not mourn the suffering and death of Jesus now will do so later: 'Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, every one who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of him' (Rev. 1:7; *cf.* Mt. 24:30). This too represents a modification of Zechariah's prophecy, since those who mourn are now not simply 'the house of David and Jerusalem' but 'all the tribes of the earth'.

It is striking to see in all of this how the New Testament writers develop and build on the images of Zechariah 9-14, often combining them with other Old Testament passages in order to portray the multifaceted nature of their understanding of Jesus as Messiah. Just as Zechariah 9-14 creatively reshapes earlier materials, so the New Testament writers incorporate and adapt the images of Zechariah 9-14. No one Old Testament image is big enough capture the whole picture. The Old Testament prophets provided a partial portrayal of the One to come, in a way designed to meet the needs of their own generation, as

[52]So *e.g.*, W. Stroud, *Treatise on the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ* (2 ed.; London: Hamilton & Adams, 1971); C.H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: CUP, 1963) 136.

[53]In 1 Jn. 5:6-8 the water and the blood are 'witnesses' to Jesus Christ.

[54]M.J.J. Menken, 'The Textual Form and the Meaning of the Quotation from Zech 12:10 in John 19:37' *CBQ* 55 (1993) 508, n. 53. *Cf.* D. Moo, *The Old Testament in the Gospel Passion Narratives* (Sheffield: Almond, 1983) 210-19; A.T. Hanson, *The Prophetic Gospel* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991) 224.

well as those of generations to come. Thus to God's people in exile, tempted to despair and give up, Ezekiel's vision of God as the good shepherd gave hope. But to the generation addressed by Zechariah 9-14, tempted to comfortable mediocrity now that the Temple had been rebuilt and Jerusalem restored, alongside a reiteration of the message of God as good shepherd (Zc. 10:3-5), comes the message that blessing is not automatic. If the good shepherd is rejected, bad shepherds will follow (Zc. 11:4-16). Those who fail to learn from the past history of Israel will be doomed to repeat it.

These diverse images are drawn together in the New Testament and applied to Jesus. Just as many pieces of furniture, fabrics and materials, each of which has their own integrity, may be drawn together in a richly furnished room in the service of a greater integrity, so the different Old Testament images are assembled together in the New Testament. The usage of the Old Testament material is never trivial or artificial,[55] nor is it limited to one or two messianic images. The many different images were freely combined and transformed by the New Testament writers,[56] to show how all the eschatological promises of the Old Testament had been fulfilled in Jesus, who is both final prophet and great high priest, suffering servant and coming king, good shepherd and sacrificial lamb.

The final word of Zechariah 9-14 and New Testament alike is grace not judgement. Though the shepherd be rejected (Zc. 11:8-9) and pierced by his own people (Zc. 12:10; 13:7-9), though the covenant be broken (Zc. 11:10) and a worthless antishepherd be allowed to rule over God's people for a while, yet that is not God's final word. For God brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, so that he might be the God of peace (Heb. 13:20; *cf.* Zc. 9:11). In Jesus, Jerusalem's king has come to speak peace between God and man. He has come to reestablish union: not simply union between Israel and Judah but a union which tears down the wall of division between Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2:14-17). He has come to enable us to be God's holy people, and him to be our God (Zc. 13:9; Rev. 21:3).

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[55]T.W. Manson, 'The Old Testament in the Teaching of Jesus', *BJRL* 34 (1951-52) 312-32.

[56]H.C. Kee, 'Messiah and the People of God' in J.T. Butler, E.W. Conrad and B.C. Ollenburger (eds.), *Understanding the Word. Essays in Honor of B.W. Anderson* (JSOTS 37; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985) 356.

CHAPTER 14

MESSIANIC MYSTERIES[1]

Martin J. Selman

Summary

The Old Testament roots of the concept of an individual eschatological Messiah show a number of significant differences from the established views of Judaism and Christianity. A Messiah in the Old Testament was an anointed leader, and the term was originally appropriate to both Davidic kings and Aaronite priests. The Old Testament's portrayals of the chronology, nature and functions of messianic figures are deliberately enigmatic, describing them in terms which were as much historical and political as eschatological and spiritual. The clarification of these enigmas in the New Testament included additional factors not present in traditional Israelite messianic thinking, and led to considerable surprise about the way Jesus fulfilled Old Testament messianic ideas.

[1]An earlier version of this article was delivered in lectures given at Samford University, Birmingham, Al. and William Jewell College, Liberty, Mo., in April 1995.

I. Introduction

The Christian belief that Jesus is the Messiah has a long prehistory. It is not, however, a straightforward matter to trace the progress of this belief from its roots in the Old Testament to the fully developed body of Christian teaching. At least three quite distinct stages can be identified in the process by which the pre-Christian messianic descriptions of the Old Testament were transformed into a fixed set of beliefs associated with Jesus of Nazareth. The earliest stage is obviously that of the Old Testament itself, which is distinguished from the stages that follow by two notable features. The first is that the Old Testament hardly uses the word 'Messiah' at all, and the second is that when it does do so, the term never refers to an eschatological figure who will inaugurate the kingdom of God. On the contrary, the messianic-type vocabulary of the Old Testament refers primarily to contemporary individuals in specific historical contexts rather than to any ideal embodiment of a future hope. It also employs a kaleidoscope of images to describe various messianic roles rather than a single monochrome picture. The second stage of development is represented by the various Jewish understandings of the intertestamental period and the first two Christian centuries. What stands out from these Jewish views is that they make use of only a limited range of the Old Testament's messianic ideas. Further, the scattered references to messianic figures in Jewish literature of this period cannot for the moment be integrated into a standard messianology by which the Jewish beliefs of the period might be categorised.[2] The third stage is represented by the New Testament's application of messianic ideas to Jesus of Nazareth, where one is faced with two contrasting attitudes. On the one hand, the New Testament proclaims Jesus as the fulfilment of the Old Testament's messianic promises and of contemporary Jewish hopes, a view that Jesus himself clearly shared. On the other hand, both first-century AD Jews and the writers of the New Testament recognized that the early Christian view of Jesus' claim to messiahship was significantly at variance with contemporary interpretation of the Old Testament. Indeed, it seems that the most important reason why the majority of Jews of the first century AD rejected Jesus as their Messiah was because he did not interpret the Bible in the way they thought he should and generally did

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[2]J.H. Charlesworth, in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Messiah* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 1-35; W.S. Green, 'Introduction: Messiah in Judaism: Rethinking the Question', in J. Neusner, *et al.* (eds.), *Judaisms and their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987) 1-13.

not conform to their expectations.[3]

This is not the place to conduct an in-depth assessment of the reasons why Jewish and Christian beliefs on this matter diverged so much from each other and from the traditional messianic ideas of the Old Testament, though the exercise is vital to the whole messianological and Christological enterprise. Rather, this paper will attempt the more limited task of examining the Old Testament contribution to the concept of the Messiah to see what light can be shed on the origins of the divergence. It will be argued that it is in the nature of Old Testament messianic concepts to be expressed in imprecise and mysterious terms, with the result that contrasting interpretations were almost inevitable. Part of the reason for the imprecision is that the Old Testament writers lacked a clear understanding of the total picture and were looking through a glass darkly on this matter as on many others (*cf.* 1 Pet. 1:10-11). This should not be taken to imply that their contributions were confused and incoherent, however. It is simply that their overall view was incomplete. Furthermore, the Old Testament describes a particular set of messianic ideas which are expressed through a series of dualities. Though these dualities have often been treated as contradictory elements, they are in fact an essential feature of the way the subject is expressed.

II. Defining the Old Testament Messiah

It is important that some attempt is made to define what the Old Testament writers understood by the word Messiah. This is an urgent issue, since merely to concentrate on the Hebrew word מָשִׁיחַ ('anointed [person]') and its related words inevitably results in a limited view of what even from an Old Testament perspective is much more than an exercise in lexicography. The chief problem is that the absolute use of מָשִׁיחַ, *i.e.*, 'the Messiah', occurs in only one passage throughout the Old Testament, namely Daniel 9:25-26, where its meaning is particularly obscure. The only point of agreement among interpreters is that the passage refers to an historical individual of the pre-New Testament

[3]Though Jewish understandings of the messianic concept went through similar developments, the problem is more acute in Christianity because of its specific application of messianic ideas to Jesus. For Jewish messianic views, see *e.g.*, J. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel: From its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah*, (ET; New York: Macmillan, 1955); J. Neusner, *et al.* (eds.), *Judaisms and their Messiahs*; G. Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken, 1971).

period, but the range of options for identifying this messianic figure is wide, including various high priests and civil leaders. It is not even certain whether the separate references in vv. 25 and 26 are to one or two anointed figures.[4] Elsewhere מָשִׁיחַ is always qualified, as in the expressions 'Yahweh's Messiah' (= 'the Lord's anointed'; 1 Sa. 24:7, 11; 2 Sa. 26:9, 11; *etc.*) and 'my/your/his messiah' (1 Sa. 2:10, 35; Ps. 2:2; Is. 45:1), and always refers to an historical person. Though some of these references can and should also be interpreted in a future sense, מָשִׁיחַ as such in the Old Testament is a neutral term applicable to a range of individuals and contexts and is not limited to a single fixed ideology. Further exegesis is required to determine the characteristics of any particular anointed individual and to ascertain to which period of time each context may refer.

Rather than confine the concept of the Messiah to a single Hebrew word, another possible approach is to examine the messianic images and symbols found in a fixed range of texts. This is in fact how both Jewish and Christian commentators have generally proceeded, and it is notable that this tendency is reflected in ancient as well as modern times.[5] The standard list of texts is certainly more extensive than a collection of lexical items and reaches from Genesis (3:15) to Malachi (3:23 [Heb. 4:5]), but on its own this approach is no more successful than the previous one in providing a framework for understanding messianic ideas in the Old Testament. The chief difficulty is that establishing such a list usually depends on criteria external to the Old Testament. Another approach would be to examine the various functions attributed to messianic figures throughout the Old Testament, but the problems associated with this line of enquiry are no less critical. Not only does this approach suffer too from the difficulty of externally-imposed categories, there is much less agreement about the role of messianic figures in the Old Testament than about identifying the passages in which they are portrayed. Debate has centred in particular round the question of whether messianic functions include suffering and death, as in Isaiah's portrait of the Suffering Servant[6] or

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[4]See the various interpretations adopted in *e.g.*, L.F. Hartman and A.A. di Lella, *The Book of Daniel* (New York: Doubleday, 1978) 251; N.W. Porteous, *Daniel* (London: SCM, 1965) 140-43; J.E. Goldingay, *Daniel* (Dallas: Word, 1989) 261.

[5]J.J.M. Roberts, 'The Old Testament's contribution to Messianic expectations', in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Messiah* 39-51, esp. 41. See also J. Becker, *Messianic Expectation in the Old Testament* (ET; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1980) 11-13.

[6]*E.g.*, S. Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (ET; Oxford: Blackwell, 1956) 187-257; H. Ringgren, *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (London: SCM, 1956) 39-67.

the various descriptions of suffering leaders in Zechariah 9-14,[7] and the extent to which the kingly rule of the son of man figure in Daniel 7 is associated with the line of David.[8]

The most practical solution seems to be to adopt aspects from each of these approaches. Any investigation, however, must begin by examining the use of Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ, since the significance attached to anointing ceremonies and anointed persons is fundamental to the whole range of messianic concepts. This can be the only secure basis for assessing whether the conventional messianic texts and traditional messianic roles make a genuine contribution to the Old Testament view of the Messiah. Using a range of approaches should also produce a more rounded picture. There is the additional advantage of being able to make comparisons between texts dealing specifically with anointing and those which deal with related but broader concepts.

III. Dualities in Messianic Thinking

A major difficulty in interpreting any messianic text is deciding whether the passage concerned refers to the present or the future. Traditional messianic interpretation of the Old Testament by the church has usually ridden roughshod over the historical context of many passages, and assumed that each passage looks only to the time of the future. The consequence has been to produce a messianological maximum, which in its uncontrolled forms is liable to find messianic expectation almost anywhere in the Old Testament. Critical scholarship, on the other hand, has been so concerned to underline the particular contexts in which so-called messianic texts have arisen that it has produced a messianological minimum. A further consequence of this latter approach has been to bring forward the date at which belief in a Messiah emerged until at least the exile[9] or even the second century BC[10] The contrasting approaches seem irreconcilable, though it is important to recognize that they both assume the passages concerned have only one main application.

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[7]R.A. Rosenberg, 'The Slain Messiah in the Old Testament', *ZAW* 99 (1987) 259-61.
[8]*E.g.*, J. Coppens, 'Le Serviteur de Yahvé et le Fils d'homme daniélique sont-ils des figures messianiques', *Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses 39* (1963) 104-14; W. Horbury, 'The Messianic Associations of "the Son of Man"', *JTS* 36 (1985) 34-55; S. Mowinckel, *He that cometh* 346-450; R.D. Rowe, 'Is Daniel's "Son of Man" messianic?', in H.H. Rowdon (ed.), *Christ the Lord* (Leicester: IVP, 1982) 71-96.
[9]S. Mowinckel, *He that cometh* 155-59.
[10]J. Becker, *Messianic Expectation* 79.

Neither approach, however, has produced an entirely satisfactory exegesis of the relevant texts, since it is a common feature of messianic passages that they are capable of more than one interpretation. Psalm 72, for example, clearly refers to the contemporary king but also takes a broader view. Phrases such as 'may he endure as long as the sun... may his name endure for ever, may it continue like the sun' (Ps. 72:5, 17) must be regarded as either totally unrealistic and idealistic hyperbole, or as part of a hope for the future that also acted as a challenge to the present. Though it is true that analogous texts from the ancient Near East often made use of hyperbole, Israel's theology about a dynastic promise that David's house, kingdom and throne would last for ever (2 Sa. 7:13, 16) suggests that passages of this kind involved more than simply exaggerated language.[11] From its origin in the Jerusalem cultus, the psalm's meaning seems to be based on an inbuilt duality involving both the present and future dimensions of reality, and should not be restricted to either the pre-exilic monarchy or an eschatological king. It refers to an anointed leader with God-given significance for his own time and the time to come. Since the duality present in this psalm is also evident in other passages dealing with messianic figures, it will now be explored further. It seems to operate at five different levels.

1. The Messiah as Present and Future

Passing reference has already been made to Nathan's oracle to David in 2 Samuel 7:11b-16. This passage is often rightly regarded as the foundation of Israel's messianic hope, even though the extent of its original core has been a matter for extended debate. One of the most interesting features about this oracle is that although it is not explicitly messianic in the eschatological sense, it does contain a repeated divine promise that David's house or dynasty will stand 'for ever' (vv. 13, 16, 16). This interest in an apparently eternal dynasty, however, is in direct contrast to another of God's promises, that David's successor will build a temple for Yahweh. Assuming that both promises are integral to the prophecy, the point seems to be that one of David's sons will be the temple-builder and the first in a continuing line of descendants that will last for ever. In other words, David's successor will be important

[11]'The language of the Psalm and the actual reigns of the successive Davidic kings, are such as to suggest that the Psalm must have looked not only to the present but also to the future' (A.A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms*, Vol. 1 (London: Oliphants, 1972) 518-19). *Cf.* also H.J. Kraus, *Psalms 60-150* (ET; Minneaspolis: Augsburg, 1989) 80-81.

both for his own sake and as a pointer to the future.

What this might mean in practice is not discussed, and if anything, the potential contradictions intensify as the oracle progresses. On the one hand, the statement (v. 14) that wrongdoers will be punished is a clear indication that David's family will continue as ordinary fallible human beings rather than be specially endowed with superhuman qualities. On the other hand, this is followed immediately by God's unequivocal guarantee to David's successor: 'I will never remove[12] my steadfast love from him as I removed it from Saul whom I removed before you' (v. 15). The only hint about how the problem of God's permanent commitment to a dynasty of sinners might be resolved is found in the unusual threefold repetition of first person verbal forms: 'I will never remove... as I removed Saul whom I removed...' This repetition suggests that the decisive responsibility for maintaining the dynasty lies in God's hands. Having made possible David's accession to the throne (vv. 8-9a), it was now up to God to ensure the dynasty's continuity.

A similar emphasis about anointed Davidic kings being caught up in God's long-term purposes is found in several other passages related to the Davidic covenant. Interestingly, the idea is found more frequently in the Psalms than in the prophets.[13] The preponderance of references in the Psalter suggests that a belief that Davidic kingship would last for ever was a regular feature of Israel's worship, perhaps articulated at a king's coronation or at an annual festival celebrating God's promises to the Davidic dynasty. Psalm 89 clearly demonstrates that these convictions about the Davidic monarchy were firmly established. The psalm opens with a divine promise addressed to the king, 'I will build your throne for all generations' (v. 4), which was then amplified by a series of covenant oaths:

> I will establish his line for ever,
> his throne while the heavens endure (v. 29 [30])...
> his line will continue for ever
> and his throne will be like the sun before me;
> like the moon it will be established for ever...
> (vv. 36-37 [37-38]).

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[12]With 1 Ch. 17:13; LXX, Syr, Vulg and most recent commentators, against MT 'my steadfast love will not depart'. *Cf.* A.A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (Dallas: Word, 1989) 112; P.K. McCarter, *II Samuel* (New York: Doubleday, 1984) 194.

[13]*E.g.*, Pss 18:50[51]; 45:6[7]; 72:5, 17; 89:4[5], 28-37[29-38]; 110:4; 132:11-12.

Yet the promises affirming the dynasty's longevity do not ignore its failings. As in 2 Samuel 7, those who commit sin and iniquity will certainly not escape punishment (vv. 30-32 [Heb. vv. 31-33]). Even in these circumstances, however, God will not renege on his commitment: 'I will not take my love from him... I will not profane my covenant' (vv. 33-34[34-35]). It is hard to imagine a more emphatic expression of hope for the anointed sinners of David's line.

The prophetic literature contains further examples of a hope centred on the contemporary line of David. Ezekiel links the idea with the return from exile (37:24-27), and Hosea applies it to the last days (3:5). The most explicit promise occurs in Isaiah 9:7 [6] in relation to the future messianic king: 'of the increase of his government there will be no end', but by setting this hope in the time of king Ahaz (Is. 7:1-9:7 [6]), its meaning is clearly contrasted with the fortunes of the reigning monarch.

In fact, messianic thinking in the prophets is frequently tied up with specific historical events, and much more so than in the Psalms. Though the family of anointed kings would be subject to judgment (Is. 7:13-25), their line would be restored after the exile (Am. 9:11-12; Je. 23:5-6; Ezk. 34:23-24) and they would take a leading role in rebuilding the temple (Zc. 4:1-14; 6:9-15). It seems that whereas the Psalms concentrated on the idea that the Davidic line would last for ever, the prophets tended to show how the promise was to be interpreted in particular historical circumstances, especially in contexts where the line was threatened with extinction.

It is worth noting in passing that the idea of a future leader who would establish God's sovereign rule preceded the rise of the monarchy, and was therefore independent of the concept of an anointed or messianic ruler. The classic Jewish and Christian messianic traditions have both recognized the importance of certain premonarchic texts where the idea occurs, even though from an Old Testament point of view the texts concerned are not properly messianic. The main passages are found in poetic portions of the Pentateuch and are prophetic in character.[14] In Genesis 3:15 an unidentified human being will achieve the ultimate defeat of the snake and all that he represents, Genesis 49:10 refers to a ruler from the tribe of Judah to whom the nations will submit, and Numbers 24:17-19 predicts a future ruler who

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[14]Though all three passages are often treated as being of monarchic date, the lack of reference to a king or to the Davidic line is strong evidence that they may well be premonarchic.

will rise like a star in the night sky to defeat Israel's enemies. It is possible that the two latter passages need refer to nothing more than a single historical event, and all three have been understood as either 'exaggerated hopes about the glorious future of the people Israel'[15] or 'fictive prophecies of the Davidic monarchy'.[16] But the reference to 'the obedience of the nations' in Genesis 49:10 has in mind more than just an ordinary victory, and the defeat of the snake is certainly viewed as a permanent reversal of the damage inflicted on the created world. Even in Numbers 24, the anticipated champion seems to belong to a distant future: 'I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near.' In all three cases a human being achieves a victory with consequences that are more long-term than immediate.

These pre-messianic passages in the Pentateuch prepare the way for the messianic promises made about David's dynasty, since they both share the idea that certain historical leaders would play a part in establishing God's future rule. But there are also significant differences between the two groups of passages. Whereas the Pentateuchal passages are mainly concerned with future events, the Davidic promises are about specific individuals. The introduction of the concept of anointing also adds three distinctive elements. Firstly, instead of a general hope of a leader who would arise from the nation of Israel (Nu. 24:17) or the tribe of Judah (Gn. 49:10), an anointed leader would arise from a named family. Secondly, whereas the Pentateuchal promises are primarily concerned with the future, the Davidic promises often focus more on contemporary leaders. Thirdly, the anointed line of David was expressly said to last for ever, in contrast to the rather unspecific future of the Pentateuchal passages. In comparison with the Pentateuchal hope, therefore, the messianic concepts attached to David's dynasty brought about a much sharper focus in relation to both the present and the future.

2. *The Messiah as Political and Spiritual*

Messianic texts are rarely concerned with a purely idealistic hope about the continuation of the Davidic line. The exercise of some form of political authority is usually mentioned as well, involving at least the nation of Israel and sometimes the whole world. A common theme

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[15]J. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel* 32; *cf.* S. Mowinckel, *He that cometh,* 11-13.
[16]J. Becker, *Messianic Expectation* 32-36, in relation to Gn. 49:8-12; Nu. 24:15-24. *Cf.* also J.J.M. Roberts, 'The Old Testament's Contribution to Messianic Expectations', in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Messiah* 39-51 ('they found their fulfilment in the monarchic period').

is that an anointed king will rescue Israel from her enemies, as indicated by the following words addressed to a contemporary king:

> Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one...
> May your arrows be sharp, may the peoples fall beneath you,
> May your arrows be sharp in the heart of the king's enemies.[17]

Another frequent theme is the involvement in of anointed leaders in Israel's restoration from exile:

> For this is what Yahweh says: "David will not fail to have a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, nor will the Levitical priests fail to have a man before me to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings and to offer sacrifices continually."[18]

Several of the royal psalms even express the confidence that the kings of David's line will rule over the whole world:

> He will rule from sea to sea
> From the River to the ends of the earth...
> All kings will bow down to him,
> All nations will serve him.[19]

Finally, some passages include anointed priests alongside anointed Davidic descendants as playing a crucial role in rebuilding the temple and reestablishing worship in Jerusalem:

> The word of Yahweh came to me: 'The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple. His hands will also complete it.'
>
> Set the crown on the head of the high priest, Joshua son of Jehozadaq. Say to him, 'This is what Yahweh of Hosts says: "Here is the man whose name is the Branch. He will branch out from his place and he will build Yahweh's temple."'[20]

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[17]Ps. 45:3-5 [4-6]; *cf.* Mi. 5:1-5; Ps. 110:5-7 (though the last of these passages may be concerned with Yahweh's defeat of foreign kings on behalf of Israel's anointed king). *Cf.* also Nu. 24:17-19 in relation to a leader who is not anointed but who carries out a similar function.
[18]Je. 33:17-18. In Je. 33;14-26 and Ezk. 34:23-24, a Davidic descendant (and in the case of Je. 33:17-26, the anointed priests) is reinstated to leadership as a result of the restoration, but he does not actually bring about the restoration. In Is. 11:10-11 and Am. 9:11-12, the association between the Davidic house and restoration is more general.
[19]Ps. 72:8-11; *cf.* Pss. 2:8-12; 89:27 [28].

Though all these incidents were firmly rooted in the actual political and religious life of ancient Israel, what distinguishes them from other Old Testament events is the manner in which the anointed leaders were to behave. Many passages describe these leaders acting or ruling with righteousness and justice.[21] These are important qualities that belong to the covenant between God and Israel, and they reflect the character of God and the standards he expects in his kingdom. Further, almost all the prophetic passages make a direct contrast between the unacceptable unrighteousness and injustice of contemporary rulers, who were usually Israelite, and the divinely approved standards of the leaders who will replace them. This point comes across particularly clearly in Jeremiah 23:5-6, where the promise to raise up a 'righteous Branch' in David's line is set against the wicked ways of Judah's leaders (or 'shepherds' as they are called in 23:1-2), especially the unrighteous behaviour of the last few Judahite kings severely criticized in ch. 22 (see especially Je. 22:13). In the matter of establishing the Davidic dynasty's rule over the nations, Psalm 2 also emphasizes the importance of spiritual values. This achievement is not seen in military or political terms, but as a gift from God brought about through belief in effective intercessory prayer: 'Ask me, that I may give you the nations as your inheritance' (Ps. 2:8).

These ideals were not just for future Davidic kings, but were equally applicable to the pre-exilic monarchy. David expressed the view, apparently in relation to himself as well as to his successors, that: 'The one who rules over people in righteousness, who rules in the fear of God, is like the light of a cloudless morning at sunrise' (2 Sa. 23:3-4).[22] In similar vein, the psalmists' hopes of universal sovereignty were focused on the king who had been installed on God's holy hill in Zion (Ps. 2:6-9). To some extent of course, these political hopes were fulfilled in Old Testament times, particularly through specific military victories and the return from exile. But if they were partly fulfilled, they also remained partly unfulfilled, and not even David could be said to have remotely measured up to them. For that reason, many prophecies of this kind were open to the possibility of further interpretation. Multiple prophecies about the return from exile, for example, as in Jeremiah 33:14-26 or Ezekiel 37:24-28, continued to emphasize that a Davidic king would again reign over Israel. The key factor, however, was not

[20]Zc. 4:8; 6:11-12;*cf.* Je. 33:14-26; Zc. 3:8; 4:1-14; 6:9-15.

[21]2 Sa. 23:3-4; Pss. 45:4 [5], 6-7 [7-8]; 72:2-4, 12-14; Is. 9:7 [6]; 11:3b-5; Je. 23:5-6; 33:15-16.

[22]*Cf.* also Pss. 45:4 [5], 6-7 [7-8]; 72:2-4, 12-14.

simply that a son of David would 'sit on the throne of the house of Israel' (Je. 33:17, *cf.* vv. 21, 26), but that he would demonstrate the necessary spiritual qualities. In Jeremiah's words, he would be a 'righteous Branch' who would 'execute justice and righteousness in the land' (33:15). To those who were actually involved in the political restoration of Israel, the fact that part of the prophets' words had been fulfilled already must have encouraged at least some of them that the time would still come when God's rule would be fully established, not just in Israel but among the nations.

3. The Messiah as Human and Divine

The passages considered so far have underlined the fact that the messianic texts of the Old Testament generally refer to actual human leaders. In some passages, however, this understanding is combined with a clear indication that anointed leaders would in some way be divine. In terms of the number of passages in which this point of view occurs, it cannot be argued that it is a major feature of Old Testament messianic thought. On the other hand, since any text that describes a person with human and divine qualities is of considerable significance wherever it occurs, the comparative infrequency of the references should not be the sole basis of their evaluation.

Two passages stand out in this regard, Isaiah 9:6-7 [5-6] and Jeremiah 23:5-6, though Psalm 45:6 [7] should probably also be included. In the case of Isaiah 9:6-7 [5-6], the gift of the epithets 'Mighty God' and 'Everlasting Father' to a human child of David's line clearly implies that he will possess divine qualities, even though the exact meaning of both phrases has been widely debated. For example, the fact that the only other occurrence of the expression אֵל גִּבּוֹר in Isaiah clearly refers to God (Is. 10:21) is strong support for translating 'Mighty God' here,[23] though the alternative renderings 'Divine Hero'[24] or 'Divine Warrior'[25] also draw attention to the child's godlike qualities. In the phrase 'Everlasting Father', the presence of divine characteristics may be deduced both from the use of the Hebrew noun for 'eternity, perpetuity' and from the fact that an Israelite king is never spoken of elsewhere in the sense of the father of his people. 'Father' is also an established title for Israel's God,[26] and the use of the epithet 'of eter-

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[23]*Cf.* also Dt. 10:17; Je. 32:18.

[24]*E.g.*, O. Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12* (2nd ed; ET; London: SCM, 1983) 204. Kaiser (213) notes that the king is designated God elsewhere in the Old Testament only in Ps. 45:6 [7].

[25]*E.g.*, R.E. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1980) 108.

nity' for a person is applicable only to God. Though neither of these phrases is elucidated any further in the context, this must not be allowed to detract from the distinctiveness of this claim about a child of David's line.[27] This conclusion is not affected by whether these names are regarded as throne names on the Egyptian pattern[28] or names given to the child at birth,[29] since the issue of whether the child is divine is based on the meaning of the names and not on the time when the child received them. On either view, 'the child is a ruler, a king, with divine attributes and divine equipment'.[30]

A second possibility that an anointed king of David's line possessed divine features is found in Jeremiah 23:5-6, and as in Isaiah 9, the issue revolves around a king's name. The name 'Yahweh-our-righteousness' is certainly divine, since it contains the full tetragrammaton rather than an abbreviated form of Yahweh's name as in Zedekiah or Jehozadaq, but it is not immediately clear whether the person to whom the name is given is also considered to be divine. Other Yahweh names of this type such as 'Yahweh-is-there' (Ezk. 48:35) or 'Yahweh-is-peace' (Judg. 6:24) are given to places or objects with no thought of them being treated as divine, most notably in Jeremiah 33:16 where the city of Jerusalem is also given the name Yahweh-our-righteousness. Two factors suggest that Jeremiah 23:5-6 should be treated differently, however. Firstly, only here is a Yahweh name applied to a human being, and secondly this king will be the epitome of justice and righteousness in contrast to all his pre-decessors. Though ordinary names like Zedekiah (= 'Yahweh is righteousness') normally expressed nothing more than the parents' pious hopes for their newborn child, because this child would be the ideal righteous king, his name would uniquely be a true reflection of his character and personality. Another notable feature which this passage shares with Isaiah 9:6-7 [5-6] is that both promises are eschatologically oriented. Isaiah 9 refers to a king who will reign 'from that time on and for ever' and whose government would have 'no end', while Jeremiah 23 refers

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[26]*E.g.*, Dt. 32:6; Pss. 2:7; 89:26 [27]; Is 63:16; Je. 3:4, 19; Mal. 2:10.
[27]*Cf.* S. Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, 104-106; H. Wildberger, 'Die Thronnamen des Messias Jes 9,5b', *TZ* 16 (1960) 316-17.
[28]A. Alt, 'Jesaja 8,23-9,6. Befreiungsnacht und Kronungstag', in W. Baumgartner *et al.* (eds.), *Festschrift für Alfred Bertholet* (Tübingen: J.C.B . Mohr, 1950) 29ff.; G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* Vol. II (London: SCM, 1965) 171-72.
[29]*E.g.*, J.N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986) 245-47.
[30]Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, 106.

to the time when 'the days are coming'. The fact that these promises are set firmly against the background of separate historico-political crises, namely the eighth century Assyrian invasion of Judah and the threat of exile in the early sixth century, raises sharply the conflict between present reality and future hope frequently evident in Old Testament messianic thought.

Psalm 45 is a royal psalm set in a cultic rather than an eschatological context, in which the opening section extols the king's military prowess and moral virtues (vv. 1-9 [2-10]). The section as a whole is addressed to the king, probably from David's line, but the address suddenly changes in v. 6 [7] to God: 'Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever'. Commentators have often tried to soften the impact of this *crux interpretum*, but the results are not convincing since the actual wording of the Hebrew is not in doubt.[31] A solution is more likely to be found in the theological realm, and since the two passages just discussed envisage a human person with divine characteristics, it is quite possible that the same kind of meaning is appropriate here. Whether the language of the address is explained in terms of hyperbole, prophetic hope, or a conviction about the essential unity of the human and divine thrones, worship in the Jerusalem temple may well have conceived of a human king who was in some way divine.

Two further groups of texts must also be briefly considered. The first group, in which all the passages are associated with the Davidic covenant (2 Sa. 7:14; Pss. 2:6-7; 89:26-27[27-28]), contains explicit references to the king as a son of God and to God as the king's father. Though the king clearly has human characteristics in all three passages, the two psalms attribute qualities to him that are certainly superhuman. In Psalm 2 he is promised universal sovereignty and in Psalm 89 he is portrayed as the first-born, that is preeminent, among all human kings. These special qualities are directly associated with the Davidic king's status as a son of God, and though they do not make him divine, they do indicate his close relationship with God. The second group of texts also refers to a close association between God and a human Davidic king, but not in terms of sonship. One passage refers to an especially generous gift of God's Spirit (Is.11:1-3a), and another speaks in terms of Yahweh's gift of superhuman strength (Mi.

[31]See discussion in A.A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms*, Vol. I (London: Oliphants, 1972) 349-50; P.C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (Waco: Word, 1983) 335-41; J.H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms* (SBT 32; London: SCM, 1976) 142-43. The MT is supported by H.J. Kraus, *Psalms 1-59* (ET; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988) 450-57; A. Weiser, *The Psalms*, (ET; London: SCM, 1962) 363.

5:4-5a). Since the gift the anointed king receives in both instances is part of God's very being, it may well be related to the idea of a father-son relationship.

Unfortunately, the psalmists and prophets of the Old Testament make no attempt to explain any further the meaning of the close relationship between God and the anointed king, whether they thought in terms of a relationship between father and son or the apparent contradiction that a person could be both human and divine. The Israelite authors were content to describe matters as far as they were able, but they left a question mark about whether the relevant passages were to be interpreted as hyperbole or as part of a genuine hope which had not yet found fulfilment.

4. The Messiah as King and Priest

The messianic idea is often treated as a royal concept. For Mowinckel, for example, 'The Messiah is simply the king in this national and religious future kingdom, which will one day be established by the miraculous intervention of Yahweh.' Obviously, considerable Old Testament evidence exists in support of this understanding, especially as the title 'Yahweh's anointed' is used exclusively of kings. But for a period of several centuries, ancient Israel recognised at least two anointed persons, namely the king and the (high) priest or the priests. The phrase 'anointed priest', in fact, is relatively common in the Pentateuch,[32] and the priests were a more permanent messianic institution than the monarchy. In short, an anointed or messianic leader in Old Testament times could be either a priest or a king.

Of special significance in this context, however, are the texts that combine these two messianic functions, namely Psalm 110:4; Jeremiah 33:14-26; and Zechariah 3:8; 4:14; 6:12-14. The earliest is the royal psalm Psalm 110 where one who is presumably an anointed king is acknowledged as a priest for ever in the order of Melchisedek (v. 4). The tradition continues through a promise about the joint restoration of the Davidic monarchy and Levitical priesthood in Jeremiah 33:14-26 to chs. 1-9 in the post-exilic prophet Zechariah.[33] The most detailed of these passages is 6:11-13, where despite repeated efforts by some commentators to avoid the conclusion that the passage refers to a joint kingship and priesthood, Joshua the high priest is given the royal title 'the Branch' and 'will rule on his throne and will be a priest on his

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[32]*E.g.*, Lv. 4:3, 5; 6:22 [15]; Nu. 3:3.
[33]Zc. 3:8; 4:1-14; 6:9-15.

throne.'[34]

There can be no doubt therefore that a tradition existed, apparently originating in the Jerusalem temple, that the two anointed offices of king and priest could on occasion be combined. Two versions of this tradition may be distinguished, based upon the two different priestly orders. While Psalm 110 envisages the Davidic king being appointed to the priestly order of Melchisedek and acting as a priest-king, Jeremiah 33 and Zechariah speak of the restoration of the Aaronic priesthood alongside the Davidic monarchy. The latter model is apparently meant in Zechariah 6:11-13, which despite a number of uncertainties, clearly refers to 'harmony' or 'peaceful understanding' (עֲצַת שָׁלוֹם) 'between the two of them' (v. 13). The existence of two versions of the priest-king tradition seems to be significant. On the one hand, the Davidic kings exercised sacral or priestly functions through their activities in blessing, intercession and offering sacrifice. On the other, the messianic tradition included the full range of activities of the Aaronic priests, including the opportunity to offer sacrifice within the temple and to gain access to the Holiest Place. On this view, the hostilities between the priests and the king in the time of Uzziah (2 Ch. 26:16-21) should be regarded as a temporary aberration, though a proper reconciliation took place may not have taken place until the monarchy was displaced at the exile.

In addition to the royal and priestly dimensions of messianic thought, prophecy could also take on a messianic role. The prophetic contribution, like that of the priests, functioned in two ways, through kings and priests speaking prophetically,[35] and through prophets who were said to be anointed. Though only one anointing of a prophet is mentioned in the Old Testament, and it is not absolutely certain that even that event actually took place (1 Ki. 19:16), other passages where anointing by God's Spirit led to prophetic activity (Is. 61:1-2; Joel 2:28-32 [3:1-5]) are sufficient warrant for regarding prophecy in a messianic light. Since these last two references are eschatological in orientation, it seems that the messianic role of prophecy belongs to both the present and future aspects of messianic thought.

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[34]There is no textual support for the frequent suggestion originating with Wellhausen to read the name of Zerubbabel rather than Joshua in Zc, 6:11. *Cf. e.g.*, D.L. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8* (London: SCM, 1985) 275-78; P.L. Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 78-79. For a defence of MT, *cf.* E. Achtermeier, *Nahum-Malachi* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1986) 131-33; C.L. and E.M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8* (New York: Doubleday, 1987) 336-75.
[35]*E.g.*,1 Sa. 10:6; 2 Sa. 23:1-7; Pss. 2:7-9; 95:7b-11.

The fact that anointed priests existed before anointed kings and that Israelite kings functioned in a priestly manner from the beginning of the monarchy suggests that priesthood belongs to the origins of the messianic concept. The same can also be said of prophecy, since it is Saul and David, Israel's first two kings, who demonstrate the strongest connections between anointed kingship and prophetic activity. In the light of this, it is hardly surprising that kingship and priesthood were combined at different times during the Old Testament period, though it is notable that the association was revived in the post-exilic period when Davidic kingship was no longer a political reality.

5. *The Messiah as Victorious yet Suffering*

Most references to anointed leaders speak of their ultimate triumph in achieving the purpose for which God had chosen them. From the very beginning of the Davidic monarchy, God had promised that David's throne and kingdom would be established for ever (2 Sa. 7:16), and similar promises of success are found in the Psalms and the prophets. The Psalms repeatedly affirm the ultimate victory of God's anointed king over his enemies,[36] and Isaiah includes descriptions of a king whose reign will be one of neverending peace and a 'root of Jesse' through whose rule 'the earth will be full of the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea.'[37] This emphasis is perhaps not too surprising, however, since the ceremony of anointing was intended to symbolise God's choice and equipping to carry out his purposes.[38] It is only natural to suppose that God would enable such individuals to complete successfully the task he had given them.

Some passages, however, present a very different picture of God's anointed leaders, describing them as being subject to various forms of humiliation and suffering. The experiences fall into three different categories. The first is straightforwardly concerned with punishments inflicted on wrongdoers among David's family. A cautionary note to this effect was part and parcel of the original dynastic oracle given to David (2 Sa. 7:14), and no leader in the royal family was exempt, not even David (2 Sa. 12:7-10). Isaiah's Immanuel prophecy is also to be understood in this light, for the Immanuel child was to be a sign of God's judgment against the contemporary Davidic king Ahaz (Is. 7:14). The second type of experience was that of undeserved suffer-

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[36]*E.g.*, Pss. 2:1-12; 72:8-11; 110:1-2, 5-6; 132:17-18.
[37]Is. 9:7 [6]; 11:9-10.
[38]1 Sa. 9:16; 10:1 (LXX, Vulg); 16:13.

ing inflicted on David's line by others. The clearest example of this is in Psalm 2, where rulers and kings are described as conspiring and plotting against Yahweh and against his anointed king (Ps. 2:1-3). Though the psalm also makes it clear that the Gentile kings will be unsuccessful, the picture of a vigorous premeditated opposition against God's chosen leader is clear enough. A similar concept also seems to lie behind the royal lament in Psalm 89:38-51 [39-52], where although the psalmist blames God for all his troubles, what he actually describes is military defeat, the destruction of his defences and possibly the end of the dynasty at the hand of the Babylonian army.[39] Although the king's lament is similar in language and style to that of laments generally in the Old Testament, indicating that the anointed king was identified with his people in their experiences, as the anointed one he was the particular focus of the people's suffering.[40] It is also significant that the psalm highlights the contradiction raised by the mismatch between God's promise and the actual events which resulted in the king's suffering. Though Yahweh had once given David a promise of an eternal covenant, now he appears to have rejected his anointed king and spurned his covenant (vv. 3-4 [4-5], 35-39 [36-40]).[41]

The third type of experience of suffering is brought about by God himself. It is true that the number of examples is small, and since they are all from the post-exilic period and are to some extent enigmatic, they cannot be said to be central to Old Testament messianic thought. They do, however, again bring to the fore the sense of contradiction involved in the idea of anointed leaders. The two key passages occur in Zechariah 9-14, a collection of eschatological prophecies in which leadership is a major theme. The first passage describes an unexpected picture of a king riding into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt (Zc. 9:9). There seems little doubt in the context that the donkey's colt

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[39]For the view that the psalm refers to some historical incident rather than a ritual transformation of the king, see, for example, H.J. Kraus, *Psalms 60-150* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989) 202-204, 210-11; Weiser, *The Psalms*, 591-94; against, *e.g.*, A.R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1955) 97-104; J.H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 109-11, 121-22. See also M.E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100* (Dallas: Word, 1990) 406-30.

[40]The psalm is in fact sometimes regarded as a communal lament. See, for example, T. Veijola, *Verheissung in der Krise: Studien zur Literatur und Theologie der Exilszeit anhand des 89. Psalm* (AASF 220; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1982) 133-43; C. Stuhlmueller, *Psalms* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1983) 62; J.L. Mays, *Psalms* (Louisville: John Knox, 1994) 287-88.

[41]'The present situation is described as an incredible contradiction of the LORD's faithfulness to the covenant with David' (J.L. Mays, *Psalms*, 284).

symbolizes the king's lowliness, though it also indicates that he comes in peace rather than riding on a warhorse (v. 10). The donkey was the ordinary domestic beast of burden throughout the ancient Near East, and the use of Hebrew עָנִי ('humble') together with a corresponding lack of reference to royal majesty leads one to conclude that this king's ability to bring victory and deliverance is closely bound up with his humble appearance. In the second passage,[42] the house of David and the people of Jerusalem are described as looking 'on me the one they have pierced'. Unfortunately, the identity of the pierced victim is not given, though the pierced one seems to be closely associated with a shepherd figure who is said to be struck and described as 'the man who stands next to me' (Zc. 13:7). If in fact the pierced one and the shepherd are one and the same person, it is by no means impossible that this suffering leader comes from the royal Davidic line.[43] A further connection is that in each case the leader's suffering serves God's purposes to restore his people. In Zechariah 12:10-13:1, the people's sins, including those of the house of David, are cleansed by the death of the pierced one, while in 13:8-9, the shepherd will purify the remnant and enable them to renew their covenant.[44] It may be that the suffering inflicted on the anointed one of Daniel 9:26-27 should also be included here, though it is not clear whether God's redemptive or salvific purposes are achieved through his tragic death.

As with the previous dualities, no explanation is given as to how anointed leaders can experience both victory and humiliation. The most that can be said is that whereas the historical figures of the Davidic line suffered God's punishment to some extent like any other Israelite, an element of undeserved suffering seems to have been attached to the anointed kings which in the post-exilic period became focused in a small number of eschatological texts where such suffering became redemptive. These latter texts are obviously related to the Suffering Servant songs of Isaiah 40-55, but the nature of the relationship remains obscure, particularly because there is no evidence

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[42]With LXX, Syr, Vulg, against MT's 'on him'.

[43]According to E. Achtemeier, *Nahum-Malachi* , 150-54, 160-64, Zc. 9:9-10; 12:10; 13:7-9 all refer to the Messiah, and represent a continuation of the Branch who is mentioned in Zc. 3:8; 6:12.

[44]Like Ps. 89:38-51 [39-52] this incident is sometimes understood in terms of an Israelite liturgy involving the king's ritual humiliation and restoration; *cf.* B. Otzen, *Studien über Deutero-Sacharja* (Acta Theologica Danica 6; Copenhagen: 1964) 178, 180-82. On the possible divine/kingly associations of the pierced figure of Zc. 12:10, *cf.* K. Larkin, *The Eschatology of Second Zechariah* (CBET 6; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994) 162-64.

in any of the Suffering Servant songs that they describe an anointed leader.[45] It is perhaps safest to say that whereas they too present an image of redemptive suffering and death, they are best treated as a parallel strand to the main lines of Old Testament messianic thinking.

III. Conclusions

(1) The messianic concept underwent a long process of development before attaining its fully fledged form as a series of expectations about an eschatological deliverer. Its origins are to be found partly in the early Israelite concepts of leadership and partly in ideas associated with the ceremony of anointing with oil. A Messiah was nothing more or nothing less than an anointed leader. The anointing ceremony was essentially a sacrament in which a person was designated and set apart by God, given authority to act and equipped to carry out a particular task or set of tasks. These ideas were amplified by psalmists and prophets, who always included some element of expectation about the manner in which anointed figures would carry out their God-given tasks.

(2) Several fundamental ideas associated with anointed leaders were inherently imprecise. The writers of the Old Testament made no attempt to resolve these ambiguities, which were the result neither of intrinsic weakness nor of later interpretation. They arose most probably because the act of anointing did not fully clarify God's intended potential for each anointed individual. Anointing tended to focus on the fact that a person had been divinely chosen rather than on what he had been chosen for.

(3) The imprecision was characterised by a fixed series of dualities, any or all of which may be relevant in individual cases. These dualities are of different kinds, and involved the nature, function and chronology of anointed persons. Some aspects of these dualities have been previously noted by Jewish and Christian scholars, as in Klausner's view that the Messiah was 'spiritual and political at the same time',[46] but the crucial point is to recognize the existence of not one but several interdependent dualities.

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[45]*Cf.* Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, 213-33, esp. the following statement: 'Since there is also not the slightest indication that the Servant was thought of as a scion of David, it follows that he is not thought of as a "Messiah" in the Old Testament sense' (*ibid.*, 228).

[46]Klaussner, *The Messianic Ideal in Israel*, 10-11.

(4) Old Testament messianic figures were usually earthly, human and time-bound, though the Davidic monarchy from its beginning was associated with the future. The future hopes associated with the Aaronic priests did not become explicit before the exile. Where messianic figures were involved in historical events such as the post-exilic restoration, such events were usually associated with further future expectations. The eschatological dimension of messianic thought arose through a number of specific factors: (a) The combination of idealistic hope expressed in the Psalms with the prophets' awareness of the gap between the failings of contemporary leaders and the ideal standards of future leaders must inevitably have led in some quarters to a longing for a future leader; (b) Israel's repeated political and military crises which threatened the continuation of the line of messianic figures, particularly in the eighth and sixth centuries, would have undermined confidence in contemporary leaders, and encouraged people with faith in God to look for a new form of divinely appointed leadership; (c) In the context of the specifically Jewish form of messianic hope, the crises of the Maccabean revolt and the imposition of Roman rule in Palestine accelerated the development of the idea of an eschatological Messiah.

(5) Actual historical figures who incorporated some combination of messianic functions were not absent in Old Testament Israel. Certainly Moses and David, and probably also Samuel, combined royal, priestly and prophetic functions, brought a spiritual dimension to their political achievements, and made a contribution to the future as well as the contemporary establishment of God's rule on earth. They functioned to some extent as models for the messianic idea, and it is not too surprising that expectations of another figure along these lines arose for the future.

(6) Jesus both fulfilled and expanded the messianic ideas of the Old Testament. He fulfilled all the qualities associated with anointed leaders in the Old Testament and did so as one who was fully human. But he also dramatically extended the messianic concept by including in it the roles of the suffering servant of Isaiah 40-55 and the son of man figure in Daniel 7, both of which centre on a divinely-chosen individual who is both lowly and exalted.[47] The result was that Jesus effectively exploded all previous messianic expectations, so that at one

[47]For an exploration of the idea that the New Testament presents Jesus as the crucified and risen Messiah, *cf.* D. Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

level it is hardly surprising that many Jews failed to recognise him as their Messiah. It was only after Jesus had risen from death that the apparently contradictory dualities of the Old Testament became clear, that the imprecision became precise, and that mysteries were revealed. But that is another story!

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